Mermaids, Witches and Amazons

The Censored Her-Story of the Sea-People

By

William Bond

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Publishing history.

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Cover picture: Photograph from the book: *Hekara, The Diving Girl’s Island.* By Fosco Maraini.

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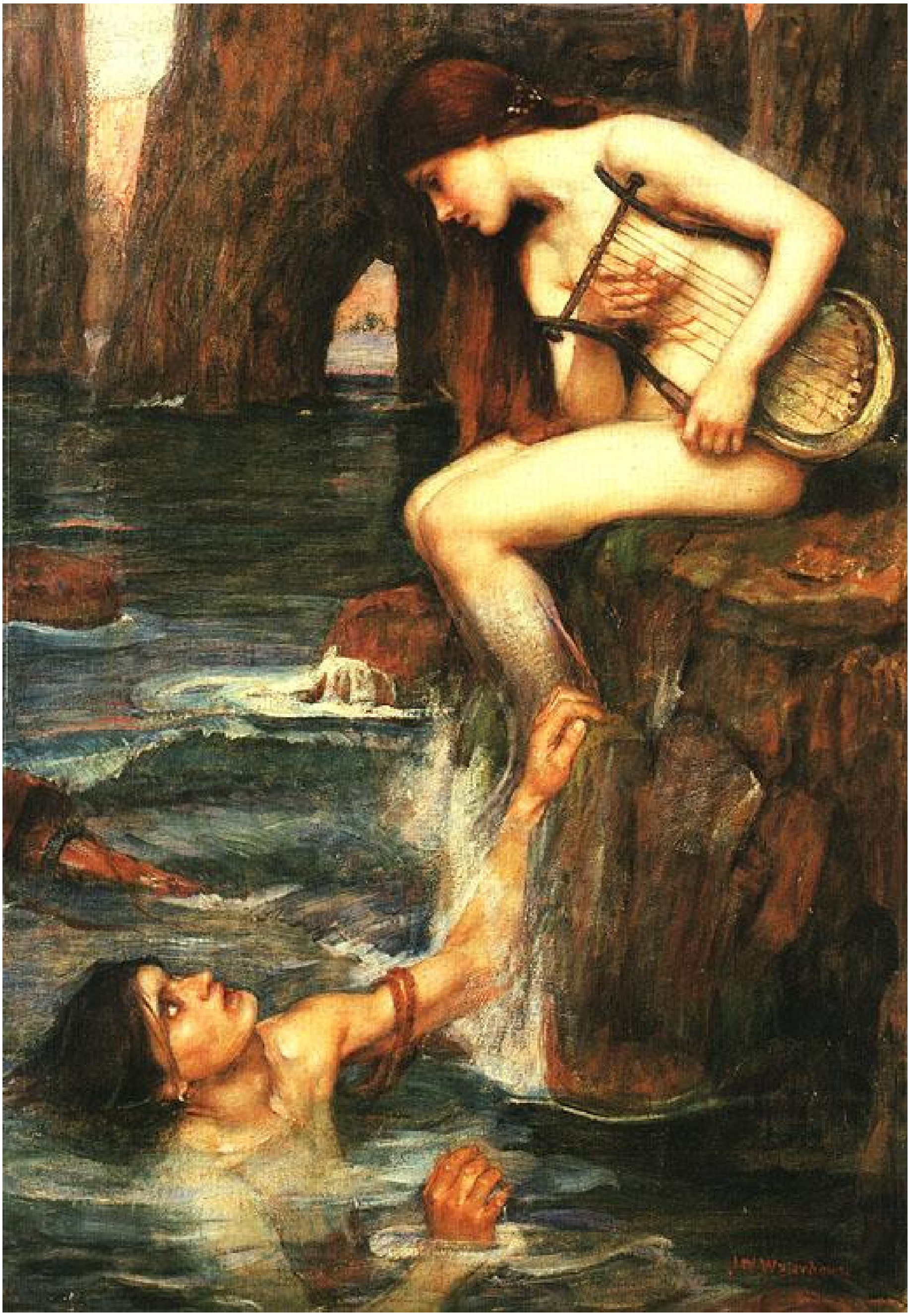

J.W. Waterhouse

The Siren, by John Waterhouse (1900)

Introduction

There is a real mystery about the mythology of mermaids. No self-respecting zoologist would ever contemplate the possibility of a creature with the upper body of a woman and the tail of a fish. Yet mermaids have been reported all over the world for the last few thousand years. There are mermaid myths and sightings from America, Asia, Africa and Europe. Very few cultures living on the coast do not have mermaid stories. The mermaid myth goes right back to ancient Greece and to the Middle East where archaeologists have found bronze mouldings of mermaids that are 3,000 years old. (As shown above). Mermaid sightings have continued right up to the 20th century, so what are the origins of this myth?

Because of the large number of mermaid sightings, commentators are unable to dismiss mermaid stories as simply the work of people's over active imagination. So the official explanation is that people have seen a manatee or dugong and mistake them for mermaids. The trouble is that dugongs and manatees look nothing like a woman with a fish's tail! A sailor would have to be extremely drunk, or very stupid, to mistake one of these creatures for a half woman and half fish. Yet people are driven to accept this explanation, simply because there is no real alternative. If mermaids are neither manatees nor dugongs, then for what other reason do we have mermaid sightings and myths?

When people think of mermaids, they class them as mythical beasts like dragons and unicorns. At one time it was believed that mythology simply came from the active imagination of people from the past, and no other explanation was needed. But as people have looked more closely at these myths they find they come from real events. If we take the story of the unicorn, it turns out that this was once a name for the rhinoceros, as explained in the following description by Marco Polo. –

scarcely smaller than elephants. They have the hair of a buffalo and feet like an elephant's. They have a single large black horn in the middle of the forehead... They have a head like a wild boar's...They spend their time by preference wallowing in mud and slime. They are very ugly brutes to look at. They are not at all such as we describe them when we relate that they let themselves be captured by virgins, but clean contrary to our notions.

(The reference to virgins was because it was once believed that only a virgin could capture and tame unicorns.)

The Romans were very familiar with rhinos because they used them in their Roman games at the Coliseum. Then Africa became cut off from Europe with the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Ottoman Empire. With Europeans being no longer able to travel to central Africa, knowledge about the rhinoceros became hazy. Eventually the only thing that Europeans knew about it was a description that it was a horse like creature with a horn in the middle of its forehead. Artists in Europe, who had never seen a rhinoceros, drew it exactly like this, not knowing that it had a far heavier build than any horse. Then because of its unusual appearance as depicted by the artists, it became a popular mythological and magical creature.

This myth was made more confusing in the Middle Ages, when whalers began to hunt for Narwhals. These are medium size whales about 5m long. The males have a long spiral tusk growing out of their forehead. These horns were so unusual that con men began to sell them as unicorn horns. This is why in many pictures of unicorns they have spiral horns. It seems these con men, in order to make these horns "a must have item", they claimed that unicorn horns were a protection against poisoning. It seems they completely fooled the aristocratic class, because it became fashionable to put parts of these horns in their drinks, thinking they were magical unicorn horns that would nullify the effects of any poison. Pharmacies at the time called these horns alicorn and they were widely used up until the mid 18th century in medicines.

This myth making changed the perception of the unicorn so much, that when Europeans moved back to Africa, sailing there by ship and seeing rhinos, they no longer recognised them as unicorns and renamed them.

The same is true for the dragon. Again it was once considered to be a purely mythical beast until Europeans visited the small Indonesia island of Komodo and discovered Komodo dragons. These are giant monitor lizards that reach a length of 3M. The bones of even larger monitor lizards have been found in Australia. This was the megalania that was 6M long and probably weighed about two tons. Scientists have theorised that it became extinct soon after humans came to Australia and suggested it was humans that caused this. This is because a giant monitor lizard will attack anything it thinks it can eat, and this would include humans. Therefore, they theorised, humans wiped them out in self-defence.

During the last ice age, ocean levels were far lower than today and most of the Indonesian islands were simply one large landmass that was joined to Asia. This does suggest that giant monitor lizards may once have existed throughout Indonesia, perhaps even China itself, where the stories of dragons became very popular. Komodo Island would have been part of this large landmass. If such a creature existed it would more likely be the size of a megalania because large animals that are trapped on islands, because of rising ocean levels, tend to get smaller in size over many generations. This is simply because there is a limitation on the food they can eat, on an island. The same thing probably happened to the Komodo dragon, they got smaller to accommodate the food available.

It seems that even though these creatures are very powerful carnivores they did have a weakness that humans could exploit. Being cold-blooded creatures, they are very sluggish during cold evenings. It would be very easy for humans to kill them by attacking them at night. Humans likely wiped out these giant lizards throughout any area they settled in, to protect themselves from attack. This means that through the activities of humans they became extinct, except in the remote island of Komodo.

During the last ice age it was possible to travel all the way from Indonesia to Europe by land. Therefore, it is possible that Komodo dragons may have once lived in Europe. This would account for the tales of dragons throughout Europe as well as China. No bones of giant monitor lizards have been found in China and Europe, however, but fossils are rare finds. Most animals that die in the wild are quickly eaten by scavengers, and in the case of monitor lizards, they will be eaten by their own kind. The only way fossils are created is when animals escaped being eaten, possibly when falling into a swamp, tar pit, or being buried in a volcanic eruption.

The only knowledge we would have of giant monitors in Europe are from stories of brave knights slaying “dragons”. However what is not mentioned in these stories is that the dragon being a cold-blooded creature would be so sluggish in the cold of the night that it would be unable to defend itself. This suggests that there are rational explanations for the existence of both the unicorn and dragon, but is this also true for mermaids?

The official explanation that mermaids are manatees or dugong is not so convincing. Authors who write about mermaids are confronted by a real mystery. Why did people in the past believe in such an outlandish creature? The belief in a woman with a fish tail seems as incredible as people believing in fairies. The difference is that few people ever claim to have seen fairies, whereas the reports of mermaid sightings are commonplace all over the world. Most commentators on mermaids do not know that many mermaid stories are written as a code. This code is used to overcome censorship, very much like the sexual innuendos used by people like Mae West in her plays and films, to get past censorship on sex in the 1930s. In her films you would have famous lines like: "Come up and see me some time" and "Is that a gun in your pocket, or are you just happy to see me?" These quotes by Mae West are totally innocuous, if you don't understand her code. When you realize that she is referring to a penis, then the innuendo becomes very clear and her lines take on a totally new meaning.

The same is true for mermaid stories. Most mermaid stories are about the censoring of women's history. To get past this censorship, authors in the past had to add magical bits within the stories, to fool the censors.

Unfortunately they have not only fooled the censors of the past, but have also fooled academics and authors in modern times, who do not know the mermaid code. This is because many mermaid stories seem very absurd. However, if we take them seriously and see the magic parts as a code, the mermaid stories take on a completely new meaning, and show us a hidden chapter of women's history.

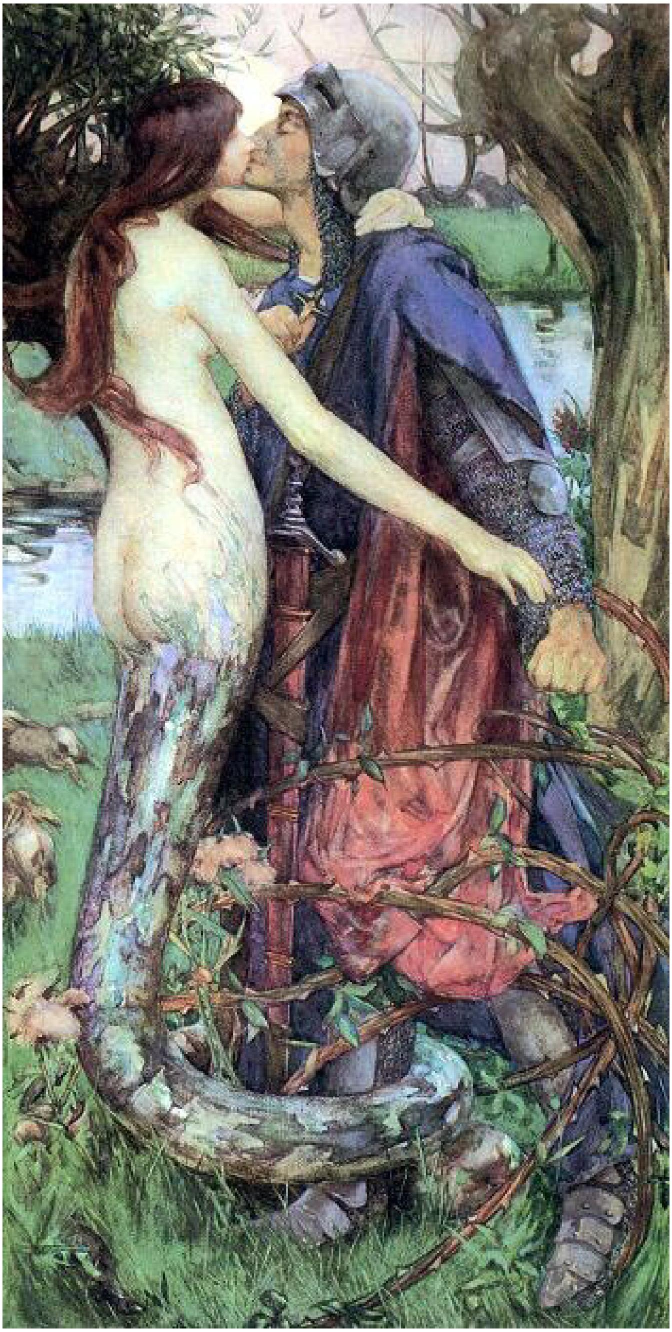
To understand this code let us look at the famous French story of Melusine. This story is about a count called Raymond who meets Melusine, a beautiful and strange woman, by a fountain in the forest. She proposes marriage to him on one condition; that she is allowed to be alone every Saturday. Raymond agrees, and they get married. Then Melusine builds a beautiful chateau for both of them to live in. They live happily together and have many children, except the children are a bit strange as they have animal like features.

One day, overhearing gossip about his wife's need to be alone on Saturday, Raymond becomes suspicious and then jealous. The next Saturday he spies on her, but instead of finding her with another man, he finds her splashing about in her bath, and her legs have been turned into a powerful fish tail! Raymond is relieved that his suspicions were unfounded, but now fears the consequences of breaking his word.

Then there is a family tragedy. In a fight, one of his sons kills another one. Despaired, he rages at Melusine, attacking her for his children's behaviour. In doing so, he lets slip his knowledge that she is a mermaid. Melusine realizes he has broken his vow and leaves him without a word.

In legends from Brittany several notable families claim that Melusine is their ancestor. She is credited with the building of castles and monuments in Brittany that still exist today. Melusine is also credited as being an ancestor of the Luxembourg royal family, as she married Prince Siegfroid in 963 A.D. The story of Melusine and Siegfroid is basically the same as Melusine and Raymond.

Now, we would normally assume that this is a fairy story because Melusine is able to magically grow a fish or serpents tail. However, if we were to take the magical element out of the story and use it as a symbol of who Melusine really was, then we can make sense of the story's hidden message. This requires us to not see it as a fanciful myth but take it seriously and assume it is a real event. If we do this, the first thing we notice is that Melusine is a very unconventional person.



Painting is by Isobel Lilian Gloag (1868-1917) and is called; The Kiss Of The Enchantress. This is probably Melusine and shows her as a magical and mythological creature that somehow is able to come on land with an impossible fish or serpents tail. This might be a reference to the Biblical story of Adam and Eve.

It is she who takes the initiative in the relationship from the start. It is she who proposes marriage to Raymond; where even today it is customary for the man to propose to the women. She also lays down the conditions of the marriage, which Raymond agrees to without question. Then it is Melusine who builds the house they live in, suggesting she is a rich and powerful woman. In most stories of the past it is the man who is the breadwinner and it is he who owns the castle or house they live in. Melusine is richer than even Raymond, who is a count, and they live in her house, not his. So, from the very start, Melusine turns all the conventions you expect in medieval times, on their head.

The story goes on to suggest that Melusine's children are 'animal like'. Now this would be a reference to the attitudes of people at the time. To call someone an animal, is a form of abuse. In European football, the authorities have had to fine clubs who allow their fans to make monkey noises at black players. In other words, this story is proposing that Melusine and her children were being subjected to racial abuse, because in some way they were different. This suggests that; Melusine was a member of a despised minority, even though she was a rich and powerful woman.

So which racial minority did Melusine belong to? A clue is given in the fact she had a magical fish tail; meaning she was a mermaid. The word mermaid, comes from the Latin word mare that means sea. This is conjoined with the English word, maid, which in English, means woman. So she was a sea-woman.

Now in ancient times there was a mysterious race called the sea people, or "the people of the sea". The first references to these people came when they invaded Egypt about 12,000 BC. They are also reported to have destroyed the Hittite empire. The problem for historians is that no one knows where they came from or who they were. As far as historians can tell they were 'displaced people'; who displaced them, no one knows. After the war with Egypt they settled down in Palestine and were the original Philistines that were the enemy of the Israelites in the Bible. The sea people were related to the Phoenicians, who were a major sea power in ancient times. They again are a mysterious and secretive people. It seems they built ocean-going ships that sailed beyond the straits of Gibraltar. It is claimed they sailed around Africa and to America thousands of years before Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus. But they kept all knowledge of these journeys a secret.

The Persians under Cyrus II the Great conquered the Phoenicians in 539 BC. They declined in power under Persian rule as many Phoenicians left their homeland and moved to Carthage. They were finally finished off by the conquest of Alexander the Great. At the same time Carthage in North Africa, another group of sea people flourished and created such a powerful sea-empire that they rivalled Rome, resulting in three wars between these two powerful states. In the third Punic War (149-146 BC) between the city of

Carthage and Rome, Carthage was finally defeated.

Yet the Phoenicians were not the only sea people; there are sea people that have survived in South East Asia up until modern times. They are called sea gypsies, and live off the coast of places such as Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Borneo, Sumatra and the Philippines. Like the gypsies who live in Europe, they are a people apart; a secretive people who have their own customs and beliefs and don't mix readily with ordinary people. So why is this? Why are sea-people all over the world so secretive?

This is not the only mystery involving people of the sea. It has been accepted for a long time that the first humans came to America about 13,000 years ago. However, in recent years archaeologists have found evidence of human habitation going back as far as 50,000 years. Not only that, but, at least three skulls of humans have been discovered ranging from 10,000 to 13,000 years old, that have raised major questions. This is because these skulls are unlike the Native American people that came from Asia. They look very much like the skulls of Australian Aborigines or white Caucasians.

Now the problem with this is that scientists believe that humans first came to America across the Bering Straits when it was a land bridge. This was because 13,000 years ago the sea levels were much lower than they are today, and the Bering land bridge was at that time free of ice. If it is accepted that people came before that time, they would have either had to come by boat or walk across the ice. To make matters worse, if we accept that the first inhabitants of America were Australian Aborigines, we would have to accept that Aborigines made the long journey across the Pacific from Australia to America about 50,000 years ago. The majority of people today would find this to be extremely incredible if not impossible. Yet is it? The Polynesian people in pre-historic times managed to settle in nearly all the Pacific islands; making vast sea-voyages in dugout canoes, as well as learning the navigation skills to find these islands. Before the Europeans invaded the Pacific, trade between the various Pacific islands was commonplace.

Yet there is another mystery here. It is assumed that the Polynesians came from South East Asia, because these are the closest lands to Polynesia. It sounds sensible if you sail there by motorboat, but it is far more difficult by sail. Thor Heyerdahl has pointed this out. To sail East from the Philippines or Indonesia in a primitive sailing boat or ship is nearly impossible, as you have to sail against the prevailing winds and ocean currents. This is what the Europeans discovered when they first came to the Pacific. Their ships were incapable of sailing upwind directly from South East Asia to the Polynesian islands or America. It was easier for them to follow the prevailing winds going north past Japan then across the Northern Pacific or going South of New Zealand into the "roaring forties". Both routes east would miss Polynesia, so the only way they could get to the Polynesian islands by sail, was to go to America first then sail from there.

Because of this, Heyerdahl made the claim that Polynesians came from America. He backs this up by pointing out the strong similarity between the Polynesians and the Native North American people. This is what his famous Kon-Tiki expedition was all about. To prove that it was possible to sail from America to the Polynesian islands in a traditional balsa raft.

The counterargument to this is that the prevailing winds do not always blow from east to west every year. In the mid-Pacific, in some years, it will blow in the opposite direction. Also, the Polynesians didn't need to sail upwind for thousands of miles, but could island hop in short journeys all the way from New Guinea to the Hawaiian Islands. There is good reason to believe both are correct, as two different peoples settled the Pacific islands before the European invasion.

What is surprising is that, in either dugout canoes or sailing rafts, ancient people managed to find and settle on Easter Island. This island is 2,000 miles from both Chile and Tahiti, while the nearest land to it is the small Pitcairn Island, which is 1,450 miles away. Yet this is also a very isolated island that was uninhabited until the Bounty mutineers settled it. However, it seems that Polynesians found this remote island and briefly settled on it even before the Bounty mutineers.

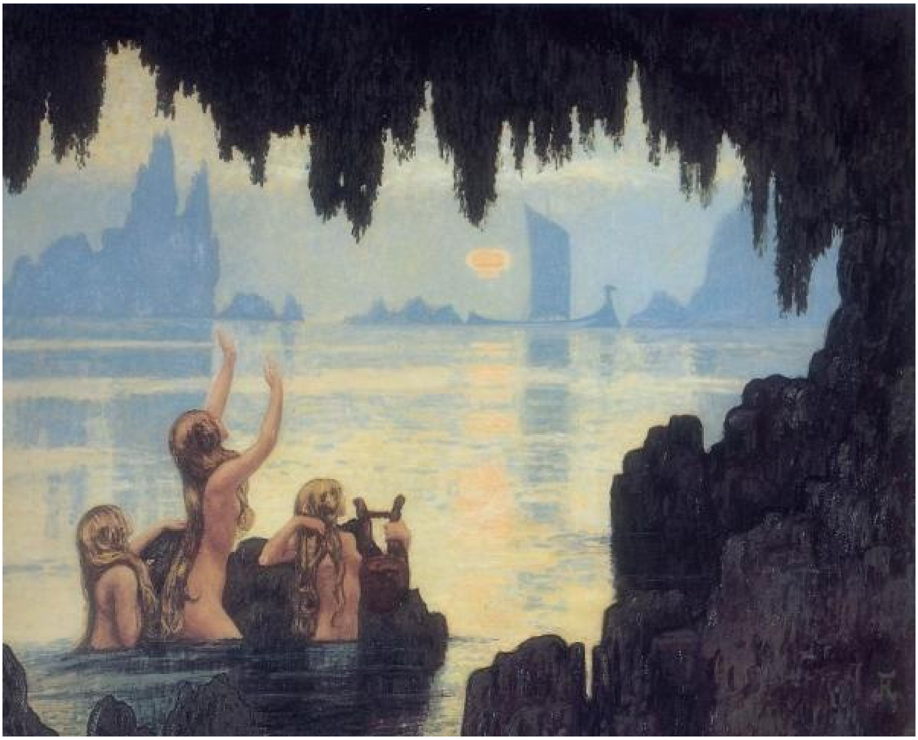
The concept of Stone-Age Australian Aborigines, sailing across the Pacific to America, seems incredible to us because we have been led to believe that human beings are totally land based animals. Further more, we assume that Stone-Age people must have seen the oceans as a very hostile environment, and certainly wouldn't go beyond the sight of land in their primitive craft. The common belief is that ocean voyages only happened when people built large and sturdy ships, in historic times that could carry enough food and water for long voyages.

Yet this belief totally excludes the experiences of the Polynesians, who explored and navigated the whole of the Pacific in primitive dug-out canoes.

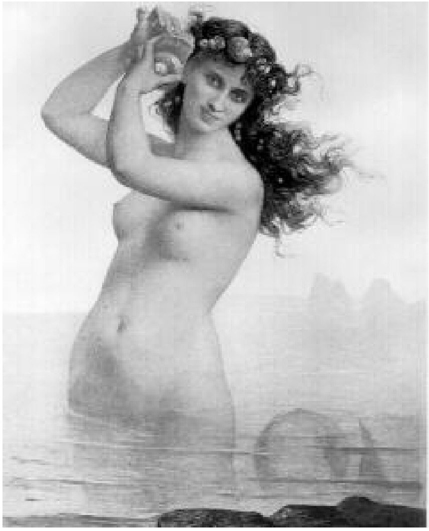
We are told that humans broke away from the ape family when our ape ancestors came out of the trees and lived on the African savannah. This is what is called the savannah theory, which tries to prove that all the differences between humans and apes developed when our distant ancestors came out of the trees. Then, the problems of living on the savannah caused us to have bigger brains, lose our fur, walk upright and learn to use tools and weapons. The problem with this theory is that humans are not the only primates to do this. Baboons have also climbed out of the trees to live on the savannah, yet they didn't develop bigger brains, bipedal walking and the skill of using tools. In fact, the savannah theory has been totally discredited, yet it is still being taught today to schoolchildren.

There is a far better theory that explains just about everything about why humans are different from apes and that is the aquatic ape theory. This theory explains why we have large brains, diving skills, breath control, speech, small mouth & chewing muscles, tongue bone descent, longer airway, projecting nose, poor sense of smell, handiness, tool use, late puberty, long legs, aligned body, poor climbing, fur loss, fatness, profuse sweating, high needs of water, sodium, iodine and poly-unsaturated fatty acids, why women have breasts and large bottoms, and why human mothers are able to give birth underwater.

As this theory can explain so much, why are establishment scientists still rejecting it? This is because if it was generally accepted, we would not only have to re-write history, we would find we are different creatures to what we have been taught we were. If we accept the aquatic ape theory then we would also have to accept that human beings are a semi-aquatic animal. There are people who live a semi-aquatic existence right up to the present day, these people were once known in historic times as mermaids.



Painting by Jean Francis Auburtin, (1866-1930)



This picture is taken from a Victorian book illustration and seems to be about getting past the censorship at the time, by drawing a nude woman then claim she is a mermaid. We can see this by the fact she has legs and her ‘tail’ doesn’t seem to be attached to her body. But there could be another explanation for this curious drawing, the illustrator knows the Mermaid code and is attempting to tell the reader the true nature of mermaids

Chapter One - The Mermaid Mystery

As previously pointed out the official explanation of mermaids is that sailors have mistaken the manatee for mermaids. Looking at a manatee or sea cow I have to say that a sailor would have to be very stupid, shortsighted or drunk to make a mistake like this. It also seems that even famous explorers like Christopher Columbus and Henry Hudson made this mistake because they also reported seeing mermaids.

To quote from the Diary of Christopher Columbus, 9 January 1493.

The day before, when the Admiral was going to the Rio del Oro, he said he saw three mermaids who came quite high out of the water but were not as pretty as they are depicted, for somehow in the face they looked like men. He said that he saw some in Guinea on the coast of Manegueta.

And to quote from the logbook of Henry Hudson on 15 June, 1608 near the Novaya Zemlya islands.

This morning one of our companie looking over boord saw a mermaid, and called up some of the companie to see her, one come up, and by that time shee was close to the ship’s side, looking earnestly upon the men: a little after, a Sea came and overturned her: From Navill upwards, her back and breasts were like a woman’s her body as big as one of us; her skin very white; and long haire hanging downe they saw her tayle, which was like the tayle of a porposse and speckled like a Macrel.

The Novaya Zemlya islands are off the north coast of Russia in the Arctic ocean, so in no way could a sea-cow live in such waters. To explain this, it is assumed that Hudson and his crew only saw a walrus, in spite of the fact his crew saw it close to the side of the ship. If it were reported they saw a merman with a very bushy moustache, then this might make some sense, but it is incredible that experienced seamen should mistake a walrus for a mermaid. Are we to believe then, that even Columbus and Hudson and their crews were so foolish as to mistake a sea cow or walrus for a women with the tail of a fish? These men were experienced sailors and would be very well acquainted with marine life in the area. Other famous men have also claimed to have seen mermaids, like Captain John Smith who became the Governor of the Virginia Colony in the early 17th century. Like Columbus he also complained they did not look as pretty as depicted in pictures of mermaids. We are asked to believe these experienced sailors were incredibly naïve or foolish; there is no other explanation for the mermaid myth.

To make sense of mermaid sightings some people have pointed out that the vagina of female sea cows is very similar to that of a human female. The suggestion is that sailors may have had sex with manatees, and perhaps to cover up this act of bestiality, they may have claimed they had intercourse with a mermaid. The difficulty with this explanation is that there are many more stories of shepherds who have sex with sheep who do seem to have the need to invent a mythical creature to cover up this act; they simply keep quiet about it. Some reports of mermaids are definitely those of sea cows. In 1739, *The Scots Magazine* carried a report that the crew of the ship *Halifax*, in the East Indies, had caught and eaten several mermaids, because they were short on rations. When they returned to London, the sailors described how the creatures moaned "with great sensibility when caught". The flesh, they claimed, tasted like veal.

This sounds horrendous if they were real mermaids, but in their description they say they are large fish, weighing two to three hundredweight and with large heads, which sounds very much like a dugong; and other people have claimed that dugongs do taste like veal. It seems very unlikely that the crew of the *Halifax* would have thought these animals were mermaids. It is more likely the spin put on by the newspaper reporter or the papers editor, who followed the old newspaper adage: “you don’t allow facts to get in the way of a good story”. A story about the crew of the *Halifax* killing and eating dugongs would be so boring, that it would not be worth reporting, but the crew also reported that these dugongs had breasts like women. This would probably be the excuse the editor needed to claim they were mermaids. Thus creating a very sensational story that has survived until the present day.

Another explanation is that sailors on long sea voyages, without the company of women, become so sex-starved that anything that remotely resembles a woman in the sea becomes a mermaid to them. This does not explain why most mermaid stories come from European seas where there are no manatees or dugongs. Also many mermaid stories come from local fishermen who do not spend months or years at sea.

Mermaids are reported all over Europe. In Ireland they were known as Merrows or Murirruhgachs, in Cornwall they were called Merrymaids, in the Shetland Islands they were known as Sea-trows, while the Germans on the Rhine called them Meerfraus. The Scandinavians called them Navmands and the Russians called them Rusalkas, while the Icelanders called them Marmennills.

One suggested explanation has been that sailors and fishermen in Europe have mistaken seals for mermaids. The seal is a fairly common sea mammal, so it would be absurd if experienced fishermen, who have been fishing all their lives, would mistake a seal for a mermaid. For instance if modern people were to spot a seal and claim it was a mermaid, we would think they were incredibly ignorant. Reports of mermaids have continued right up to the 19th century and even a few in the 20th century. This means mermaid reports continue through, “the age of reason” where no one believes in mythical beasts anymore. So it seems we have to believe that people who report seeing mermaids are either drunk, mentally deficient, or liars. Or is there another explanation?

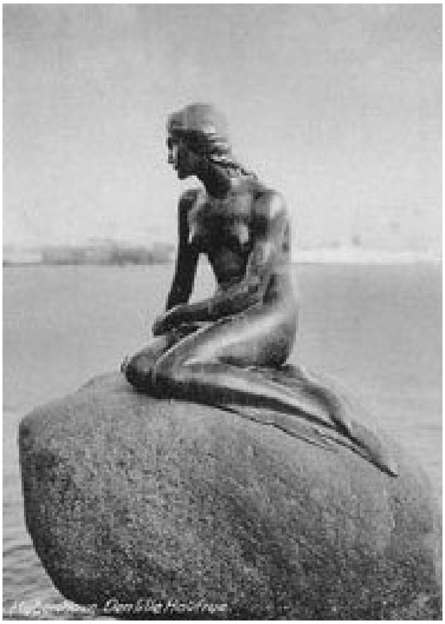
As we can see from the folk-tales about unicorns and dragons, they were names of real animals. People have attempted to explain the mermaid legends by looking for an animal similar to the description of them. This is why it has been assumed that the mermaid was either a manatee or dugong. Perhaps we need to look at the mermaid story from a different perspective. For instance, it seems that they are mostly women, while there are very few reports of mermen. Oddly, there are a number of reports of mermaids having two tails! Mermaids are also known for their wonderful singing voices and their ability to dance! Yet if we take these reports seriously, we may get an understanding of what is really going on.

In many mermaid stories we find they come out of the sea and even marry. Which is a very clever trick, if you have a fish’s tail. Like this story from Zennor in Cornwall.

The people of Zennor had long wondered at the beauty of a richly dressed lady who attended divine service at the church. None knew whence she came, but when she fell in love with Matthew Trewella and lured him away, tongues began to wag. Neither was seen again for many years, until one Sunday morning the sailors on a ship anchored near Pendower Cove were surprised to see a mermaid rising from the water, and recognised her as none other than the mysterious visitor to Zennor Church. She asked the captain to raise his anchor, as it was barring the entrance to her house. Her likeness can be seen to this day carved on a pew-end in Zennor Church.

If we take away the magical element of her living in a house below the sea, this story is very much like the French story of Melusine. Like

Melusine she is a rich woman, and it is she who takes the initiative in pursuing Matthew Trewella, and they end up living in her house. This is the opposite of the conventions of the time, when women were supposed to be submissive, and everything she had, was owned either by her father or husband. Yet again we also have a mermaid that can magically create legs when she walks on land.



Let's look at the famous statue of The Little mermaid, (on left) sitting at Langelinie in Copenhagen, which is one of Denmark's biggest tourist attractions. The sculptor Edvard Eriksen created the sculpture in 1913. Yet if we look at it closely, we do not find a woman with a fishtail; **she has legs**. In fact, it is just a sculpture of a nude woman sitting on a rock, with only her calves and feet looking fishlike. So why did the sculptor make her like this? Why did he not make her the same as mermaid myths and put a fish's tail on her? Could it be, that he knew the reality of what mermaids really were? Many mermaid reports are simply of nude women, which we can see from the following report. –

From *The Times* newspaper, 8th September 1809.

About twelve years ago when I was Parochial Schoolmaster at Reay, in the course of my walking on the shore of Sandside Bay, being a fine warm day in summer, I was induced to extend my walk towards Sandside Head, when my attention was arrested by the appearance of a figure resembling an unclothed human female, sitting upon a rock extending into the sea, and apparently in the action of combing its hair, which flowed around its shoulders, and of a light brown colour. The resemblance which the figure bore to its prototype in all its visible parts was so striking, that had not the rock on which it was sitting been dangerous for bathing, I would have been constrained to have regarded it as really an human form, and to an eye unaccustomed to the situation, it must have undoubtedly appeared as such. The head was covered with hair of the colour above mentioned and shaded on the crown, the forehead round, the face plump. The cheeks ruddy, the eyes blue, the mouth and lips of a natural form, resembling those of a man; the teeth I could not discover, as the mouth was shut; the breasts and abdomen, the arms and fingers of the size in which the hands were employed, did not appear to be webbed, but as to this I am not positive. It remained on the rock *three or four minutes after I observed it, and was exercised during that period in combing its hair, which was long and thick, and of which it appeared proud, and then dropped into the sea, which was level with the abdomen, from whence it did not reappear to me, I had a distinct view of its features, being at no great distance on an eminence above the rock on which it was sitting, and the sun brightly shining.*

Immediately before its getting into its natural element it seemed to have observed me, as the eyes were directed towards the eminence on which I stood. It may be necessary to remark, that previous to the period I beheld the object, I had heard it frequently reported by several persons, and some of them person whose veracity I never heard disputed, that they had seen such a phenomenon as I have described, though then, like many others, I was not disposed to credit their testimony on this subject. I can say of a truth, that it was only by seeing the phenomenon, I was perfectly convinced of its existence.

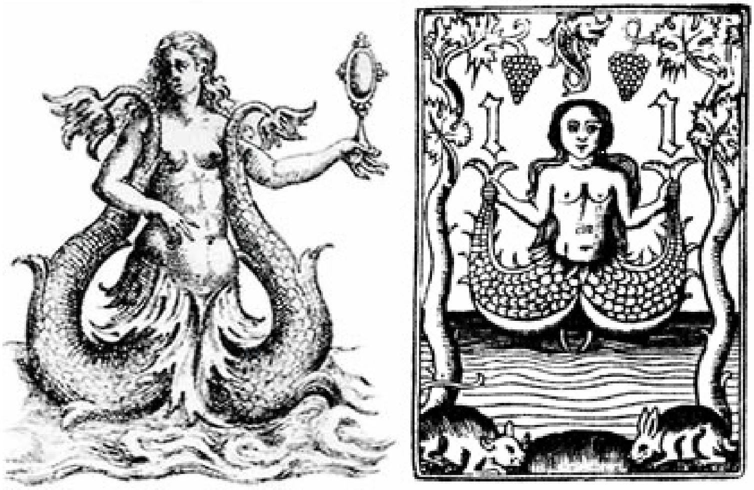
If the above narrative can in any degree be subservient towards establishing the existence of a phenomenon hitherto almost incredible to naturalists, or to remove the scepticism of others, who are ready to dispute everything which they cannot fully comprehend, you are welcome to it from,

Dear Sir,
Your most obliged, and most humble servant,
WILLIAM MUNRO

William Munro was not the first to sight mermaids in Caithness, Scotland. In 1804 two girls also reported seeing mermaids in the same area, while Munro himself also claimed that mermaid sightings were commonplace in the area.

Now the School Master clearly states at first, that what he saw was a naked women and made no mention of a fishtail. It seems he only assumed she was a mermaid until he realized that the sea near where she sat was dangerous for swimmers. Another question he may have asked himself: what was a naked woman doing swimming in the sea, this was after all, 19th century Scotland. Such behaviour may not be so unusual in the 21st century on a nudist beach. But women in those times did not go in for athletic sports like swimming in dangerous waters, or parade themselves completely nude. He also claimed to see the mermaid combing her hair, (which is a common theme in many mermaid's reports). Yet, looking after her hair would be the action of an ordinary woman, not a sea-creature.

Another mermaid sighting was reported in the *Aberdeen Chronicle* in 1688, which claimed that mermaids can be seen and heard singing hymns at the mouth of Scotland's River Dee on May 1st, 13th and 29th. At first sight this seems very strange because, how was it that mermaids know the words and music of hymns? That wouldn't make any sense if mermaids were sea dwellers, but it would make a lot of sense if they were ordinary women.



Also there are many reports of mermaids having two tails, as we can see from the medieval images above. In French, the mermaid is called "la luxure", which means double-tailed. Also it is claimed that Melusine had two tails, which is a very strange concept but not so strange when we realize that the two tails could be two legs.

Reports of mermaids having legs are not that unusual. In Ireland they report that the mermaids lived on dry land below the sea. (Which sounds like a very Irish story.) In the Shetland Islands they report that mermaids wear animal skins to swim in the water and then take them off to walk on land. These islanders also report that they are descendants from mermaids. In the Orkney Islands they claim that mermaids don't have fish's tails, but instead they wear long petticoats that look like a fish's tail when they swim in the sea. In fact, in many of the earlier reports of mermaids in the British Isles, a fish tail is not mentioned at all; the concept of a fish tail is a later invention, in this part of the world.

Mermaid reports go right back to the Ancient Greeks who called them Nereids, sea-nymphs or sirens. (nymphs in Greek simply means, 'young women'.). But in these reports they are not women with a fish's tail, they are simply nude women swimming in the sea or lying on rocks, beaches or riverbanks. In Greek myths, sirens are supposed to be half woman and half bird, because of their amazing singing voices. But in Spain, sirens are just another name for mermaids.

In many mermaid stories they are seen playing musical instruments or using a hand mirror and combs. In no way could a sea-creature make something like this; they would have to be made on land. As previously pointed out; looking after their hair, and playing musical instruments, is the behaviour of ordinary women.

A famous mermaid sighting was in Newark Bay in Deerness, Orkney. This mermaid was seen hundreds of times, by visitors, over a few summers in the 1890s. From documented reports, it appears that the mermaid stayed some distance from the shore, so exact details are vague.

To quote one account of this sighting:

It is about six to seven feet in length, has a little black head, with neck, a snow-white body and two arms, and in swimming it just appears like a human being. At times it will appear to be siding on a sunken rock, and will wave and work its hands.

Again everyone assumed what they saw was a traditional mermaid that is half fish and half woman. But the description is of a normal woman swimming in the sea.

If that is the case, are we then looking for women with a fish's tail? Or are mermaids simply ordinary women? This then begs the question: why would these women want to swim in the sea? After all, and as far as we know, in the past it was very unusual for people to swim in the sea in European waters. This practice only began in the 19th century when bathing became fashionable, and wealthy women would go into the water, with the help of outlandish bathing machines.

There is also the problem of the temperature of the water. Stories of naked women swimming in the sea on the south coast of England or in the Mediterranean Sea are fairly reasonable. But we get reports of mermaids on islands north of Scotland like the Shetlands and Orkney Islands, and there are even reports from Finland, Iceland and Russia! In these arctic waters a man in the sea would freeze to death within 20 minutes. So why would any woman in her right mind want to swim in these freezing seas? We can find an explanation for this in the following story:

Hendrik Hamel was a member of the crew of the Dutch ship *Sperwer*, with sixty-four men on board, which left Batavia on June 18th, 1653. Then in the area between Japan and Korea the *Sperwer* sank in a storm and twenty-eight men perished. The remaining thirty-six survivors were extremely lucky and were driven ashore on the southern coast of the Korean island of Cheju.

This island's name means in Korean "the district over there". It was so isolated that, for hundreds of years, the Korean government sent criminals to the island, and out-of-favour officials banished from the mainland by the government usually ruled it.

The *Sperwer* survivors were all interned for ten months on the island before they were transported to Seoul. Then they were employed as bodyguards to a general for about three years. All the men desperately wanted to get home, but the Korean authorities refused to allow this. Korea at that time was unknown by the Europeans and feared conquest by them. If these men returned home and revealed their knowledge of Korea, they might return with a European navy. So most of the *Sperwer* survivors spent the rest of their lives living in Korea, but eight men managed to escape to China. Hendrick Hamel was one of them and he finally made it from China back to Holland. He then wrote down his experiences in a book called *Hamel's Journal and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea 1653 - 1666*.

This book is very important to scholars, because it was the first description of Korea by a European, and it is known to be a very accurate journal as Korean scholars support everything Hamel describes; but in one area, he seems to have let himself down, and that was by claiming that in Cheju, there were mermaids on the island. Yet scholars know that what he referred to as mermaids, were in fact, haenyo divers.

Haenyo in Korean means woman diver. It is known that divers have harvested the seabed off southern Korea and Japan for over 1,500 years. Male divers still exist in Japan and once were used in Korea, but the overwhelming majority are women. This is because the water temperature goes down to 8 degrees Celsius and women can withstand this very cold temperature because they have a higher percentage of subcutaneous fat than men, which insulates them from the cold water. (Some men, who are very fat, are also able to withstand these cold-water temperatures, but they are the exception. The average man could not survive, if immersed too long in these waters, without a wet-suit).

In the 20th century several studies have been done on haenyo divers by scientists who have dubbed them; “the hardiest women of the world”. In a study by the scientists Suk Ki Hong and Herman Rahn in the late 60s, they found that they could dive to a depth of 20 feet unaided apart from a wet-suit and goggles and remain underwater for as long as 3 minutes. Modern aids like wet suits and goggles are a great help, as in the past haenyo divers would suffer blindness from their eyes being constantly exposed to seawater. Wet-suits makes it less likely they suffer from hypothermia, though in Japan, where they also have ama divers, modern aids are banned, including wet suits in some areas. The word ama comes from; Amaterasu the Japanese Sun Goddess but today it simply means, ‘sea woman’. In other words, the Japanese word ama, and the English word mermaid, (sea-woman), both mean the same thing.

Female divers are a very controversial subject in Korea, because these women have become the main ‘breadwinners’. This means that while the women are out working, the men have to look after the home and children. In a male-dominated society like Korea this is shocking and an embarrassment, to the degree that these women are referred to as Amazons and their husbands are looked down upon for being too “feeble”. The women's economic and social independence from male control sharply contrasts with the enforced dependency on men observed in mainland Korean women.

Koreans in the past become so embarrassed by the status of the haenyo divers that all knowledge of them was strictly censored and their activities banned. This was enforced on the mainland but not on the remote islands of Mara, Udo and Cheju. To quote Prof Ko: "The Central Government forbade the women from diving, but the women just gave them some abalone to look away". (Abalone are a marine mollusc that is considered a great delicacy by a number of Asian cultures. Because of this; high prices are paid for abalone meat).

This has changed since the 1960s, when Western tourists discovered women divers in Korea and Japan. Since then, haenyo divers have become a popular tourist attraction, and this has allowed women divers to, "Come out of the closet".

Now it is of interest, that although both Korean and Western scholars accept that Hamel's journal was accurate, we still have a mystery. Why did he make the mistake of thinking haenyo divers were mermaids? The assumption made by some commentators is that he was just an ignorant seaman, but the accuracy of his journal disproves this. The explanation could be that the way mermaids were seen back in the 17th century, might be different to what we know about mermaids today. We now assume that a mermaid is a woman with the tail of a fish, but this might not always have been true. The concept of a creature that was half fish and half women was an embellishment during the middle ages. As previously pointed out, the Koreans found that haenyo divers to be such an embarrassment that all knowledge of them was heavily censored. So if the profession of female divers had died out in Korea, back in the 19th century, we today, would not know anything about them, except the report from Hamel that there were mermaids on the island.

The fact of women divers being an embarrassment in Korea may also be true of other parts of the world. Male chauvinism is not unique to Korea. It is claimed that the ban and censorship of women divers in Korea came through the influence of Confucianism, which is a Chinese doctrine. In China mermaids were called 'dragon wives' which presumably is because they were as assertive as the Amazon like women divers in Korea. So it does suggest there was once a similar ban in China of women divers, and through censorship we now no longer know anything about them.

Female divers could also be an embarrassment in Europe. Hamel might have been fully aware that mermaids were female divers because he had seen them working in European waters. And he might have assumed that the 17th century readers of his book would also be aware of this fact. It could be that women divers were as commonplace in Europe as they were in Korea and Japan in the 17th century. Then because of male chauvinism, the hostility of the Christian Church and changing economic conditions the work of female divers disappeared. (Food became more plentiful because of intensive farming so the demand for shellfish wasn't so great.)

Photo by Fosco Maraini of Japanese ama diver foraging for shellfish and editable seaweed. (I have asked Penguin books permission to use these photos from the book, *Hekara, The Diving Girl's Island.* I have also attempted to contact the widow of the late Fosco Maraini, for permission to use them).

So the profession died out, and if European countries had censored the facts about women divers in the same way the Korea authorities had done, then the only knowledge that would survive about women divers would be mermaid legends. In Korea the practice of women diving was completely banned on the mainland. This is true in many Pacific islands today where there is a custom of banning women from fishing and diving. So this also could have happened in Europe.

This is confirmed by Captain John Saris who sailed to Japan in three ships, the *Cloue*, the *Hector* and the *Thomas*, in 1611. He witnessed ama divers working and later wrote:

Women divers, that lived with their household and family upon the water, as in Holland they do the like.

Suggesting that women divers where once commonplace in Holland in the 17th century, the references about living on the water is what sea gypsies still do in South East Asia. They live on boats or on long stilt houses on the water. Could it be that people once did the same in Holland?

The concept that ama divers are mermaids is not a new idea. Francis Haar made the same point, in his book, *Mermaids Of Japan*, a book about ama divers. (Francis Haar wrote a number of books on Japanese life). If we assume that mermaids are in fact women divers, it means that the many sightings of mermaids indicate an earlier tradition of women divers throughout Europe, (as well as America and Africa before it was conquered by Europeans). Furthermore, this tradition must have continued into the 19th century judging by the sightings of mermaids. Yet this fact was censored and we can see the hostility of chauvinistic men towards women divers, or mermaids, in reports of their relationship with the Church in medieval times.

In those times, there were bizarre stories of priests who, encountering mermaids on the seashore, would curse them as devils and threaten them with eternal damnation. The mermaids' usual response was to burst into tears! (Which sounds like the response of ordinary women to verbal abuse). They also report that a mermaid from the Isle of Iona become so upset by these condemnations that she visited one priest daily to plead for her soul. So we see very aggressive attempts by priests to convert diver women into ordinary submissive women, and in some cases this succeeded.

In the 6th century off the northwest coast of Ireland a mermaid was caught, baptised and educated and was called Saint Murgen. In 1403 a Carmelite monk, John Gerbrandus wrote, "a wyld woman" was washed through a broken dike in the Netherlands and was found by some milkmaids. Clothed and fed, she was taught to spin wool and eventually taken to Haarlem. She then learnt "to worship the cross" and remained in speechless piety for fifteen years.

In the book, *De Propietatibus Rerum*, by Bartholomew Angelicus, he warned that mermaids charmed seamen through sweet music. "But the truth is that they are strong whores," who will lead men "to poverty and to mischief." He also claimed that a mermaid will lull a sailor to sleep, and kidnap him, and take him to a dry place for sex, and if he refuses, "then she slayeth him and eateth his flesh." In other words, in calling mermaids, "strong whores" he is saying they are assertive women, like Amazon haenyo divers.

These stories only sound weird if we take the traditional view of a mermaid. If we assume that mermaids are women divers, then it gives an insight into the Christian Church's hostility to these workingwomen. This is because Christianity in the past wanted to keep "women in their place". So they must have seen the confidence and assertive diver women as a threat. The Church tried to convert these women divers into being 'ordinary' submissive women, and would curse and verbally attack them if they refused. It also seems that mermaids were associated with witches and we know what the Christian Church did to witches. The infamous witch hunts of the Middle Ages completely wiped out the profession of women healers and herbalists, allowing this vocation to be taken over by male doctors. It must also be remembered that up until the 20th century women were only allowed to do the lowest menial jobs. The experience from Japan and Korea shows that divers were well paid and this may be true of divers in Europe. Then the coming of anti-female religions like Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Confucianism brought about a change in attitude towards this ancient tradition. It is of interest that one of the foods banned by Judaism is shellfish. Was this because it was women who traditionally harvested this food? Another reason could be that shellfish was probably available through the Philistines, the enemies of the Jews in the Bible. The Philistines were part of the sea-peoples, which I will discuss, in a later chapter.

On the Orkneys there are the stories of the Finwives as reported on the web-site.- http://www.orkneyjar.com/folklore/finfolk/finwife.htm

The lore surrounding the Orkney Finwife has a distinctly disjointed feel. So much so that I believe the surviving tales are a mish-mash of various traditions and myth.

On first glance, the Finwife stories appear to be a combination of tales involving Orkney's "spae" wives - wise women or witches, huldrefolk and mermaid lore.

All these are conveniently merged with the tales of the Finmen.

But while the Finman actively shunned contact with mortals - unless absolutely necessary to his purpose - the Finwife was more involved with her human neighbours.

As a child of the Finfolk, the Finwife was saaid to begin her life as a mermaid - stereotypically beautiful with long, glistening fish tail.

If, however, the young mermaid married a Finman - a fate that awaited her if she did not acquire a mortal huband - she was doomed to become progressively uglier, eventually becoming a haggard Finwife.

Tradition dictates that these Finwives were often sent to shore to use her magic to earn precious silver for her husband. Once settled on land, she would often tell her neighbours she was of Caithness origin - in other words not Orcadian - and then "pretend to earn a living" by spinning and knitting.

The Finwife was renowned for her skill in curing diseases in men and cattle. Because of this is usually did not take long to become an invaluable member of the community. Once accepted she would begin to practice her "infernal arts", all the while sending the silver coins she earned back to her avaricious husband beneath the waves.

If the supply of "white metal" came sparingly or was delayed at any time, the unfortunate Finwife could expect a visit from her Finman husband, who, upon his arrival, would administer a sound beating that usually resulted in the witch being confined to bed for days.

A curious parallel to witch tales from other cultures is that the Finwife was said to keep a black cat.

The similarity ends here, however, as the Finwife's cat had the ability to transform into a fish so it could carry messages between its mistress and her relatives in Finfolkaheem.

(Finfolkaheem is mythical island which was the finfolk’s ancestral home.)

If we were to look at this story from the point of view of a mermaid, with a fish's tail and who lives in the sea, it seems a wildly fanciful story. But if we see mermaids as women divers, it makes perfect sense.

The fishwife starts off being a mermaid; in other words a women diver. Then she gets married. The report says that after this she becomes ugly and haggard; but this would be true of all women, as they get older. Tradition dictates that Finwives use their magic to earn money. So she is still a career woman, and if she can no longer earn a living diving, she does so as an herbalist, spinner or knitting. In this way she is very similar to gypsy women and witches. The report then says that when she begins to earn money the finman husband would demand it from her and beat her up if she refused. This again is not that unusual; pimps do the same to prostitutes all the time. It seems that finmen are basically 'kept men', with the finwife as the breadwinner. This would make it unlikely that he would beat up his wife as she had the power to stop keeping him. So this could be something added to disguise the fact of finmen being kept men. It could be that the finmen were at home looking after the children while the finwifes went to work.

It is of interest, that in Elizabethan times, prostitutes were referred to as mermaids. This would make sense, as during the winter months when the water was too cold for diving, women divers being the main breadwinner of the family would need an alternative form of income. So any women divers, not skilled enough to be a spinner, or know enough to be a competent herbalist, might have to resort to prostitution to feed her family. It also could be the reflection on the sexual behaviour of mermaid communities that had a more free and easy attitude to sexuality than ordinary people at that time. Nymphs, the Greek word for mermaids had reputation of sexual license and freedom, as I will later discuss in other chapters these mermaid communities may have had a good reason to be like this.

The Finfolk also shunned contact with ordinary people. The same is true for the ama divers in Japan. The ama divers and their families live a life distinct from ordinary Japanese, who refer to them as sea-gypsies.

The connection between herbalists and women divers is also shown in another mermaid story. In this story an herbalist from Galloway tried to cure a beautiful girl named May of illness. He was also very much in love with her and hoped to marry her. But whatever he tried did not work and the girl remained ill. Then one evening as he sat in despondency on the sea-shore, a mermaid raised her head from the sea nearby and sang:

Would you let bonnie May die in your hand. And let mugwort flowering in the land?

The herbalist took the hint and gathered the flowers of mugwort and made up a medicine and gave it to May, which restored her to health. In Wales there is the story of the lady of Llyn y Fan Fach, who imparted her herbal lore to her three sons, the Physicians of Mydfai. The Mermaid Dragon-wives of China were also famed for their knowledge of herbs and their skill in curing diseases.

These are positive mermaid stories and if we take away the magical mermaid myth and see the mermaid as an ordinary woman, we can see in the story from Galloway that the mermaid is part of the community, because she knows about May, her illness and the unsuccessful efforts of the herbalist to heal her. So she advises the herbalist when he is alone, on the seashore. We also cannot assume that the mermaid is young and inexperienced. In Japan and Korea women divers continue their trade into their 70s. So this mermaid could also have been an experienced middle-aged herbalist as well.

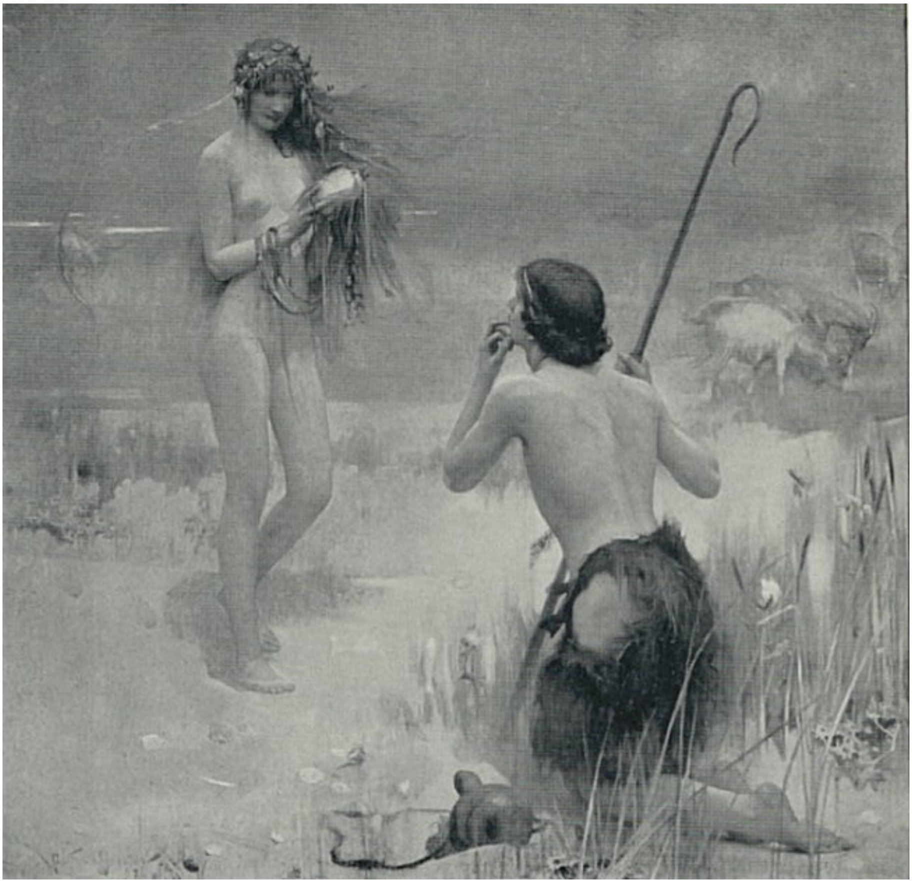
In the 12th century there was a story from Wales that was also about a mermaid herbalist: A farmer's son in Blaensawdc, near Llandcusant was with his cattle near the lake of Llyn y Fan Fach when he met a beautiful women combing her hair and using the clear water as a mirror. The youth fell instantly in love with her and after talking to her, proposed marriage. She accepted, but on the precondition that if he struck her three blows without cause, she would leave him. He willingly agreed to her terms.

After their marriage, the lady brought many cattle out of the lake, suggesting she was wealthy. They then lived on a farm, had three sons and were happy and prosperous. Yet three times, the husband did tap his wife: the first when she was reluctant to go to a christening; the second when she cried at a wedding; and the third when she laughed during a funeral. When she received the last blow or tap she cried to the husband: "The last blow has been struck, our marriage contract is broken, and at an end. Farewell!" She then left, taking her cattle with her. (It might seem strange having cattle in a lake, but the cattle might be a breed used to living in wetlands where there were lakes.)

The husband it seems was completely bewildered by this and claimed that they were hardly blows but just taps and did not think they were without cause. This story gives us an insight into the different status of women compared with the sea-people and land-people. It seems in those days; husbands hitting wives was 'normal' but certainly not tolerated in the sea people communities. This is probably why she made the proviso about being hit.

The story continued that one-day, when one of the sons, Rhiwallon, grew up, he was disconsolately wandering by the lake, mournful of the loss of his mother when she appeared out of the waters. She told him that she wanted him to be a benefactor, by healing people of their diseases. She gave him a bag containing herbs and instructions on how to use them.

Their meeting place is still known as Lmiady Madygon which means "The Physician's Gate". Her two other sons also met their mother at the lakeside and she gave them the same instructions, teaching them how to use many plants and herbs. Under her training, her three sons became celebrated physicians. She also instructed them so that their skill and knowledge was to be available to the very poor as well as the rich, and so they gave free treatment to people who would not normally be able to afford a physician. This also gives us another insight into the differences between the sea-people and ordinary people. In the past and even in places like the USA today, it was normal for doctors to refuse to treat people who could not afford their services. But the sea-people had different values, and never refused treatment for those unable to pay.



This painting by Arthur Hacker, (1858 - 1919) is called “The Sea Maiden” which as I have previously pointed out is another name for mermaid. She is of course naked, as clothing would be a hindrance for her in her job as a diver. The obvious explanation could be that she is receiving a gift from the young shepherd. Perhaps it is an engagement ring, which would make sense of why he is kneeling before her. So it could be a “Romeo and Juliet” type story of two lovers from two different communities of people, a sea-maiden and a landlubber falling in love.

The problem is that what she is holding looks like a bottle, perhaps with herbal medicine in it, and it looks more like she is giving it to him. So perhaps it has another explanation. She is also an herbalist, which means that he is kneeling before her because of her high status. As an herbalist and witch she wouldn’t be someone you treated with any form of disrespect. Could it mean that Arthur Hacker was aware that mermaids, witches and herbalists were the same people and was trying to convey this fact in this picture? As I will show, other artists seem to be aware of the mermaid code and attempt to show in their pictures what mermaids really were.

The caring nature of mermaids is also shown in the following report: In July 1881 *The Richmond Dispatch* reported a story of a woman in Cuba who, running for her life from attackers, jumped into the sea. She was rescued by mermaids, and then later on, they put on a ship headed for New Orleans. This story sounds really crazy if it was about sea-creatures, but if the mermaids were women divers, then being working women, they would be able to generously pay for the women's passage to America.

Before the Caribbean was invaded by the Spanish, the original people, the Neo-Taino, called mermaids Aycayia who were renowned for their beautiful singing voices. They worshipped a Goddess called Jagua who was also a mermaid. In West Africa, mermaids were called Mami Wata, and in Cameroon they were called Jengu.

Many mermaid stories are about a mermaid who marries a fisherman and has children, but still has a yearning to return to the sea. In some tales she does this and leaves both her husband and children behind. This resembles the plight of modern day women who try to juggle a job while looking after a husband and children. A woman working as a diver full time would not have the time or energy to look after a husband and children as well. In Korea the man looking after the home and children solves this problem, but because of pressure by the Church, this after awhile, may not have been allowed in European countries. These mermaid stories may be about the dilemma faced by women divers concerning society's rules that women should look after the home and children as her primary responsibility. So perhaps many women divers in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries had to choose between working as a diver or becoming a wife and mother.

Female wool spinners before the industrial revolution had the same problem. Spinning wool by hand was a highly skilled job and women on average were far better at it than men. This gave these women a well-paying job and the more highly skilled even became very wealthy. So it is of interest that the word spinster comes from the word spinner. This indicates that even hundreds of years ago many women preferred the independence of a well paying job like wool spinning, rather than becoming a wife. Another point is that in some fairy stories, the wicked witch has a spinning wheel and uses it to perform magic. So we find a connection in witchcraft to both spinners and divers.

What comes across in all these stories is a form of discrimination against women similar to that suffered by black people in the southern states of the USA after slavery was made illegal. Successful or educated blacks were attacked and murdered by the Ku-Klu-Klan. Likewise, witch hunters probably threatened successful women healers, herbalists, spinners and divers. The only reason wool spinners escaped persecution was that they were unable to replace these skilled women with men, until the industrial revolution. There is evidence that woman divers were persecuted in the same way female herbalists were. As there are many mermaid stories where these women divers find themselves in conflict with Christian priests.

In the infamous witch-hunts witch-finders discovered a method to determine if a women was a witch. They did this by binding her hands and feet and throwing her into a pond or river. If she floated she was a witch, but if she drowned, she was not! This cruel logic can only make sense if witches and mermaids were the same people. An experience women diver, even if she was tied up, could probably save herself from drowning in the water. This would be very unlikely for a woman who had never swam before. This suggests that witch-finders saw all women divers as witches.

Mermaids have been discredited from the days of early Christianity in Britain. In the Arthurian legends, a legacy from the ancient Celts, it is Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay is made the main villain. In the Christianised versions of the King Arthur stories, she steals Excalibur, the sword that makes Arthur invincible. She then tricks him into having an incestuous relationship with her. This results in their son Mordred, who in the end leads an army to overthrow Arthur's kingdom and mortally wounds Arthur. She also tricks and overcomes Merlin and places him in bondage, so he can no longer help Arthur. (Though in some versions it is Nimue who defeats Merlin). In some stories she sows the seeds of discontentment between Lancelot and Queen Guinevere. She also tricks and tries to seduce Sir Gawaine in his battle with the Green Knight.

It is remarkable that in the ancient Breton language, Morgens are called sea-women, water spirits or mermaids, and along with Vivienne and Nimue, she is also one of the Ladies of the Lake. These three women are also associated with the ancient Triple Goddesses, of Mother, Maid and Crone. It was the ladies of the lake who gave Arthur the Excalibur sword in the first place and took Arthur away when he was mortally wounded. Fay also means fairy, so she is also called a sea-fairy. She was also called, “The Great Queen”. In Scotland, the treacherous whirlpool in the Inner Hebrides, commonly known as the Corryveckan, was once known as “Morrigan's Cauldron”. Some healing wells are also sacred to her in Britain - known as Morgan's wells.

In the ancient Celtic stories, Morgens were clearly held in high regard, and were probably the leaders and shamwomen of the community. Then when the patriarchal Christians took over, they set about discrediting Morgens because they saw them as rivals in their quest to gain power over the people. This is why Morgan le Fay becomes a villain in the Christian Arthurian stories.

Melusine, in some of her stories, also lived on the Isle of Avalon (The kingdom of King Arthur). There is a story of Melusine's mother, Pressyne which follows a similar theme. When out hunting, Elynas, King of Albany, (Scotland) meets Pressyne in the forests. He found her so beautiful that he tried to persuade her to marry him. She agreed on one condition: that he must never enter her chamber when she gave birth or bathed her children. She later gives birth to three girls: Melusine, Melior and Paltyne. Then the king breaks his promise and discovers she is a mermaid, so Pressyne takes her children to the Isle of Avalon. Later on Melusine grows up and learns of her father's broken promise and in revenge, with her two sisters, captures their father and locks him up in a mountain. (Which is what Morgan le Fay or Nimue did to Merlin).

In Estonian folklore there is another story of Melusine, though this time the handsome youth lives with her in her house beneath the sea. She demands privacy every Thursday, but he finally spies on her and sees her in her true form as a mermaid. The next day she says farewell to him and he finds himself back on the seashore and changed into an old man. Soon after, he dies.

In some stories Melusine turns into a dragon instead of a mermaid. In fact, female dragons and mermaids seem to get mixed up in many mermaid stories. This is interesting because as previously mentioned; Chinese mermaids were also referred to as "dragon wives".

There are both Chinese and African Myths that are very similar to the story of Melusine: In the Chinese myth; a handsome youth was seated by the side of a well when a sea-woman called 'Abundant Pearl Princess', fell in love with him. (This name is significant because before pearl farms, the only way pearls could be obtained was by diving for oysters.) She cast a spell over the youth, who became enchanted by her beauty and she took him off to live in her underwater palace, where they got married. After three years, the youth began to have a longing to return to his former life. The princess pleaded with him to stay but finally gave up and decided to go with him. Together they travelled back to land and the youth built his princess a house by the sea. Then she became pregnant and she exacted a promise from him not to look upon her until the child was born. He gave the promise, but one day, curiosity got the better of him. He peeked into his wife's bedroom and found her in the form of a dragon. She was furious at him for doing this and left him after the child was born, he was never to see her again.

An African story comes from a Tshi folk tale about a 14th century king of Benin. It seemed he married a woman from Chama who was by nature a fish, who made her husband promise never to reveal his wife's origins. Then some time after their marriage, the woman wished to return to her former home and the king decided to come with her. Unfortunately, in her watery world he was wounded by a fisherman's spear, forcing him to return home and the true nature of his wife's nature was revealed. At first this did not seem to be a problem until he took a new wife, who taunted the fish-woman about her origins. This upset her so much that she returned to her water home, permanently. Two of her children stayed with her husband and her descendants bear the fish-woman's name. This story in Africa again shows the conflict between the sea people and the landlubbers, it seems that in Africa, mermaids were called, "river witches". This conflict was commonplace throughout the world, in ancient times.

All these stories have a Romeo and Juliet type theme where their love was doomed because they come from two different types of people. Melusine was seen as a powerful person, and used on many German and Scandinavian Coat of Arms, where she is shown having two fish tails. Mermaids appear on many Coats of Arms throughout Europe, suggesting some became very rich and powerful women.

There is a similar theme in a Native America legend from the Passamoquoddy tribe called, "He Hwas, the Mermaid".

A man and his wife had two daughters and they lived by a great lake, (or sea, depending on the version of the legend used). The parents warned their daughters never to swim in the water, but this only intrigued the girls who swam in the lake or sea in secret.

One day their father found their clothes on the beach and saw them swimming far out in the water. He called them back to shore, and they obeyed, but when they tried to climb onto the beach they found they could not do so. It seems that in the water they became covered in slime and had become snakes from the waist down.

Their parents became distressed over this, but their daughters sang to them telling them not to worry. Telling them that when they are in their canoe they will no longer need to paddle, as they will push them along.

Later, some other men found their clothes on the shore and looked up and saw the two daughters swimming in the water. The men got in a canoe and tried to capture them and managed to grab one of them. In the struggle one of the men cut off the hair of the girl that had been caught. The daughters then threaten the men, saying they would overturn the canoe and drown the men if they did not return the hair and leave them alone. The men quickly agreed to do this and left. This legend gives us an insight to what the relationship between the Mermaid people and the Native Americans who lived inland. If we take out the magic bits of the story of them suddenly growing a snake's tail, we gain an insight to the meaning of the real story.

The parents in this story disapproved of their daughters becoming friendly with a nearby community of mermaids, but the girls did make friends in secret and grew to like the life of a mermaid so much so, that they yearned to become mermaids themselves. The references to them becoming slimy, is that swimmers in cold water tend to cover themselves in grease or fat to help protect them from the cold. English Channel swimmers do this, as did the Yamana women of Tierra Del Fuego. (Which I will discuss in a later chapter). The attempt by the men to kidnap the two daughters demonstrated hostility between the land based Indians and the Mermaid people. The reference that the parents 'no longer need to paddle their canoe' might mean that the parents had to become part of the mermaid community, if they wanted to continue to be with their daughters. The hostility between the two communities may not have allowed them to be part of both of them, and they had to choose which community they could live in.

The conflict between mermaids and land-based people can also be seen in Homer's *Odyssey*. On his long journey home, Ulysses has to pass the siren's island. He is warned that the voices of the sirens are so wonderful that sailors are compelled to sail towards the sirens and wreck themselves on the island's rocks. So Ulysses blocks up the ears of his crew with wax and had himself tied to the mast. Why he himself did not also block up his ears with wax is never made clear, but it allowed for a dramatic story, as Ulysses became so intoxicated by the sirens singing he struggled to set himself loose from his bonds, but his crew following his previous orders bound him even more tightly. Because of this, he and his crew pass the island safely in spite of the efforts of the sirens. Traditionally in ancient Greece, sirens were supposed to be half woman and half bird and sometimes artist paint and draw them like this. But we can find similar stories in many mermaid stories. For instance; we also find comparable stories in more modern times: In Guernsey Folklore by Sir Edgar Macculloch there are stories of sirens that lived on the island of Sark. Guernsey fishermen claimed they were old women, yet their singing was so wonderful that they would still draw sailors in to sail too near to the dangerous coast around Sark. Then a fierce storm would suddenly arise, driving the vessel onto the rocks. To drive the point home, of how dangerous these sirens are. The fishermen also claimed that the sirens would carry the sailors to the bottom of the sea and devour them.

Yet not all stories tell of the death of sailors when hearing or seeing mermaids or sirens, and not all claim their singing is irresistible. In another story, knights setting out on the Second Crusade of 1147 passed a group of sirens in the Bay of Biscay. The Crusaders claimed the sirens made horrible noises like wailing, laughing and jeering like insolent men.

This at first annoyed the knights, but then they became frightened of the magic powers of these women. This suggests that the Crusaders and the sea people were not on good terms with each other, as the sea-women were jeering and perhaps making fun of the Crusaders. There is a similar story in the Greek legend of Jason and the Argonauts. They also had to pass the siren's island, but they escaped by having a flute player, Orpheus, on board, who drowned out the siren's song. He wasn't completely successful, though, as one crewmember, Butes, threw himself madly into the sea to be with the sirens.

Jason also encountered nymphs. At Mysia they went ashore to find food and water, and Hylas, Hercules male lover, met some nymphs who dragged him into a stream. Hercules was greatly upset by this and stayed behind looking for his lost lover, which he never finds, while Jason sailed on is his quest for the Golden Fleece.

Jason had other encounters with nymphs but this time they helped him. The Argonauts were once stranded on a beach without water, and in danger of dying of thirst. Hesperides, a nymph, found them and led them to a spring. Then at the Straits of Messina, they encountered a very heavy current, but they were helped by sea nymphs who guided them safely through the straits. This was probably the strait between the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea, which has a very powerful current. (At that time, interestingly the Black Sea was then known as the Amazon Sea).

There is another famous story of nymphs; Actaeon is a son of a king and a great hunter. One day while hunting in the woods, on his own, he accidentally see the Goddess Diana or Artemis bathing naked in a large pool with her nymphs. She sees him and becomes so angry at his intrusion that she turns him into a stag. He is then hunted down and torn apart by his own hunting dogs, because they have been trained to hunt stags. In another version of the same story she turns him into a stag because he boasts of being a greater hunter than her. This story gives an insight into the nature of nymphs, suggesting they will not put up with interference from people who do not share their way of life.

The stories of sirens do not only come from the ancient Greeks but from the Romans as well: For instance; there are folk-tales of a small island near Cape Pelorus in Sicily where sirens were believed to live. It was claimed that sailors passing the island would be so entranced by the sirens' singing, they would allow their ships to be dashed to pieces upon the rocks.

Both sirens and mermaids are known for their wonderful singing voices. Both haenyo and ama divers practise deep breathing before they go into the water to allow them to stay underwater longer. Similarly, opera singers also practise breathing exercises to develop powerful and controlled singing. Because of the deep breathing exercises they do, it would not be surprising that sirens or mermaids also have equally powerful and controlled voices when they sang. The beauty of their singing is mentioned many times in mermaid stories.

In some traditional cultures, women working together in groups do tend to sing together. The same would be true for women divers, who probably sang together resting between dives. This leads to another mermaid stereotype, of a mermaid sitting on a rock playing a harp or flute or other musical instruments.

What is interesting about this is that modern freedivers do exactly the same breathing exercises as opera singers. They both do diaphragm training as this controls how much air a person can get into their lungs. They both need to practice holding their breaths; the reason opera singers need to do this, is when they need to hold a long note, letting the air out slowly.

Pearl divers in the Pacific used to sing between dives as it is claimed that doing this makes it far less likely for them to have the bends. Perhaps continuing to work the lungs by singing after a dive makes it easier for the body to rid itself of any pressurized air in the blood stream. Ama and haenyo divers of Japan and Korea do not have a tradition of singing but they whistle instead, during their pre-dive breathing exercises. It is claimed that whistling is better than singing in warming up the breathing muscles for diving, because it helps oxygenates the blood better and faster, than singing.

Mermaids have been known to play musical instruments as well. If mermaids sung together before a dive then it would make sense for some women to bring along musical instrument to accompany the singing. But also it seems that learning to play a wind instrument properly you need to do the same breathing exercises as do opera singers. So mermaids who do not have very nice voices might be encouraged to play wind instruments instead.

This all suggests that many mermaids had operatic voices and there voices must have carried far out to sea, so this would be the origins of the, ‘siren call’. Where sailors claimed they were lured inshore and wrecked themselves on rocks because they were enchanted by the mermaids beautiful singing. Though it has to be said not in all reports of mermaids and sirens do they have such wonderful voices, some claim their singing was awful, as in the report from the crusaders. Perhaps not all mermaid groups sang in tune, also not all people like opera, so it could be a case of either bad singing or a different taste in music.

Stories of sirens or mermaids luring sailors on to the rocks are similar to European stories that claim that bad-luck and shipwreck will happen to any sailor seeing a mermaid. We can see this in the following sea-shanty. –

Friday morn when we set sail. Not very far from land. We there did espy a fair pretty maid. With a comb and a glass in her hand, her hand, her hand, with a comb and a glass in her hand.

Chorus: While the raging seas, the raging sea did roar. And the stormy winds did blow. While we jolly sailor-boys were up into the top. And the landlubbers lying down below, below, below, and the landlubbers lying down below.

Then up starts the captain of our gallant ship. And a brave young man was he: ‘I’ve a wife and a child in fair Bristol town. But a widow I fear she will be. She will be, but widow I fear she will be’

Chorus:

Then up starts the mate of our gallant ship. And a bold young man was he: ‘Oh! I have a wife in fair Portsmouth town, but a widow I fear she will be. She will be, but widow I fear she will be.

Chorus:

Then up starts the cook of our gallant ship, and a gruff old soul was he: ‘Oh! I have a wife in fair Plymouth town, but a widow I fear she will be.

She will be, but widow I fear she will be.

Chorus:

And then up spoke the little cabin boy. And a pretty little boy was he; 'Oh! I am more grievd for my daddy and my mammy. Than you for your wives all three. All three, than you for your wives all three.

Chorus:

Then three times round went our gallant ship. And three times round went she; for the want of a lifeboat they all went down. And she sank to the bottom of the sea. The sea, the sea, and she sank to the bottom of the sea.

Chorus:

It is of interest that in this version of the sea-shanty the mermaid is simply called a "fair pretty maid". It is only in later versions of this song that she is called a mermaid.

The ama and haenyo divers sometimes use boats or rafts. In many cases they simply jump off rocks into to the sea, then clamber back with whatever they have caught. This could be true of sirens in ancient Greece and mermaids in Europe. Unfortunately being too close to shore is the most dangerous situation for any sailboat. The problem would be that passing boats of young male sailors would typically want to gawk at the naked women they see lying on rocks, resting between dives. They even might be lured by the sound of their singing, knowing that the people singing would be nude women.

They would bring their boats close inshore to have a closer look, and some of them would wreck themselves, on hidden rocks. Or get caught on a lee shore by a change of wind blowing towards the land or a strong gust of wind making their ship temporary uncontrollable, with little room to manoeuvre. Typically, these sailors would blame the women divers, and not their own foolishness, for their misfortune.

The stories of the dangers of sirens and mermaids might have been originally warnings to sailors not to venture in too close inshore to gawk at nude women divers. But over time, it was turned into an attack on mermaids, claiming the women divers lured the sailors to their doom on purpose. Which suggests that stories of sirens that lured sailors close inshore to weak their ships is an attack on the sea-people.

There use to be "Wreakers" who would deliberately wreak ships. These wreakers would stand on the shore and light a lantern and swing it backwards and forwards. This swinging motion would imitate the swinging motion of a lantern on a ship. A ship's crew out to sea on a dark night were they cannot see the shore, seeing this light will assume that they can see the light of a ship in anchor in a harbour or inlet. The ship would sail in only to find out too late it was sailing towards rocks. The ship would be wreaked and the wreakers would loot the cargo that came ashore. It would then be easy for these wreakers to blame mermaids for this misfortune, giving the sea people a bad name, and being a despised minority, people would believe these stories. This then would become a justification to wipe out the coastal villages of the sea-people or force them to convert to the life-style of the majority land people. This means that, stories of sirens who deliberately wreak ships are not just fanciful stories but were probably, deadly propaganda, justifying attacks on sea people. The Church had done the same to the witches claiming they were evil and in league with the Devil before they set about slaughtering millions of women. Witches and mermaids were the same people and so mermaids were being wiped out in the witch-hunts.

As I will show in a later chapter, women divers like the Native Tasmanians, the Yamana people of Tierra Del Fuego and the people of Cheju Island in Korea, and Bijago people of West Africa have all been subjected to genocide in recent times. While the sea-people of South East Asia are under pressure to change their ways.

Up until the stirrings of feminism in the 20th century, women throughout the world were referred to as the "weaker sex". Men claimed that they were not only bigger and stronger than women, but more intelligent, and more capable of doing everything better than women, (except, of course, childbirth). Women divers were a big blow to men's fragile egos because it was one job that women could do better than men. It also seems that being able to outperform men, gave women a strong ego boost, because throughout the world, women divers seem to have been very confident and assertive women. As mentioned before, the Chinese referred to mermaids as dragon wives, while in Africa they were called river-witches. It seems the only reason why women divers survived in Korea into modern times is because they lived on remote islands and diving for food was vital for the islanders' survival.

The same thing must have happened in Europe. We get a strong hint of this when in 1723 a Danish Royal commission was given the job of investigating a number of local sightings of mermaids. It was also decided that if the commission found that mermaids did not exist, it would be against the law even to mention them. This amounts to censorship on the subject of mermaids. As it turned out, the commission did not completely go along with this because although at first they decided that mermaids did not exist, they backtracked when they themselves claimed to have seen a merman. Perhaps there was a hidden message here, with the commission saying that mermen were acceptable because they were male, but mermaids were not because they were female. The problem would be that in the time before wet suits, few men could endure the cold of the Baltic Sea to make a living as a diver. While those who could do this probably ended up being incapable of fathering children, because of the damaging effects on testicles from swimming in cold water for long periods.

The more likely purpose of the commission was to put pressure on mermaid communities to conform to the standards and behaviour of the wider community.

Even after the witch-hunts, people in remote villages on the coast, sometimes living on the edge of starvation could not afford to ignore an important food resource like shellfish and edible seaweed, so they continued this ancient tradition, in secret. The problem would be that outsiders, who were unaware of what was going on, would occasionally see the divers working, as in the case of the schoolmaster William Munro in Caithness. In an age when women were supposed to be physically weak, modest and submissive, these outsiders would be shocked to see naked, athletic and assertive women confidently diving for marine food. It would be unlikely that the women would be clothed because wet clothing would be too much of a drag in water, and swimming costumes were not introduced until the Victorian times.

It is true that many ama divers today do wear clothing, which is similar to the claim from the Orkney Islands of mermaids wearing petticoats. Even though the petticoats would cause a lot of drag in the water while swimming, and also be dangerous if caught in rocks, while underwater. Some ama divers when diving deep, tie a rope around their waist, and are pulled up by men in a boat. Unfortunately, some divers have been drowned when this rope has been caught in rocks. So a trailing petticoat would be even more likely to be caught in rocks than a rope and so would be even more dangerous. Reports from the Shetland Islands of mermaids wearing sealskins make sense, as this would be an early form of wet suit. Even wet suits have been known to be dangerous to ama divers. The rubbery material can get jammed in the rough rock surface when divers slide their arms into narrow caves and underneath rocks searching for shellfish. It must be remembered that for a breath-holding diver, even if she was to struggle to free herself for a minute, the struggle will quickly use up all the air she has in her lungs. Putting her in a very dangerous situation.

The picture below, is of a modern diver using a mono fin. What is noticeable about modern divers who use mono fins his how much they look like traditional mermaids. So could it be that the mermaid people might have used mono fins in the past?

Swimming aids like flippers or fins are not new. Leonardo Da Vinci made a sketch of them while Benjamin Franklin made a pair of swimfins as a boy out of two thin pieces of wood, shaped like artists palettes. He swam with them in the Charles River in Boston Massachusetts. The Polynesians also used flippers or fins before the Europeans invaded their islands.

It is true that the ama divers do not use flippers, because they are no help to them, but that might be to do with how they traditionally work. When ama divers forage in very deep waters, they tie a rope around their waist and dive down carrying a net. They fill the net with marine food and men on the boat above pull them to the surface using the rope around their waist. Perhaps mermaids in Europe used a different method in foraging for food at great depths.

Modern freedivers claim that the mono fin gives them power without too much effort which is very important for breath holding divers.

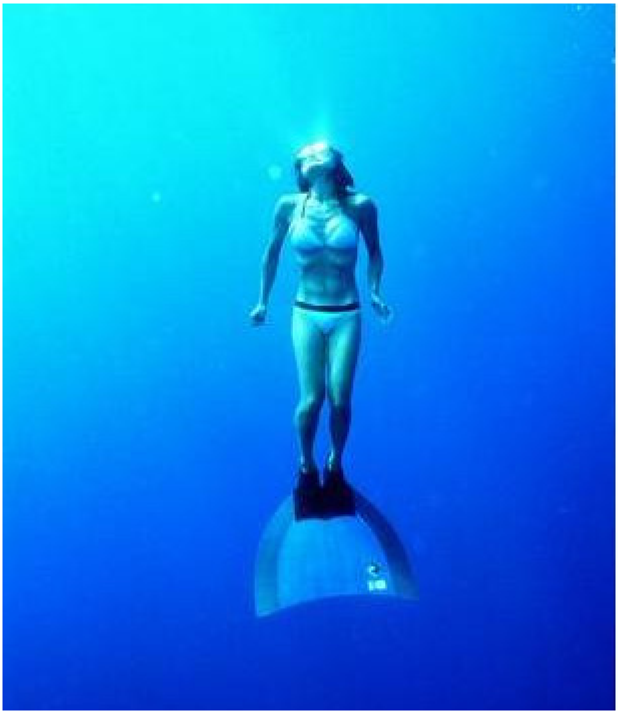


Photo taken by Aquaxel of a Female Freediver using a monofin from. - http://flickr.com/photos/20079415@N00/135521110/

For working divers carrying any weight to the surface, such as a net full of shellfish, uses up a lot of energy. So the diver could be forced to drop the net so she can get to the surface before she runs out of breath. So a large mono fin would be a great help in making it possible to lift larger weights to the surface.

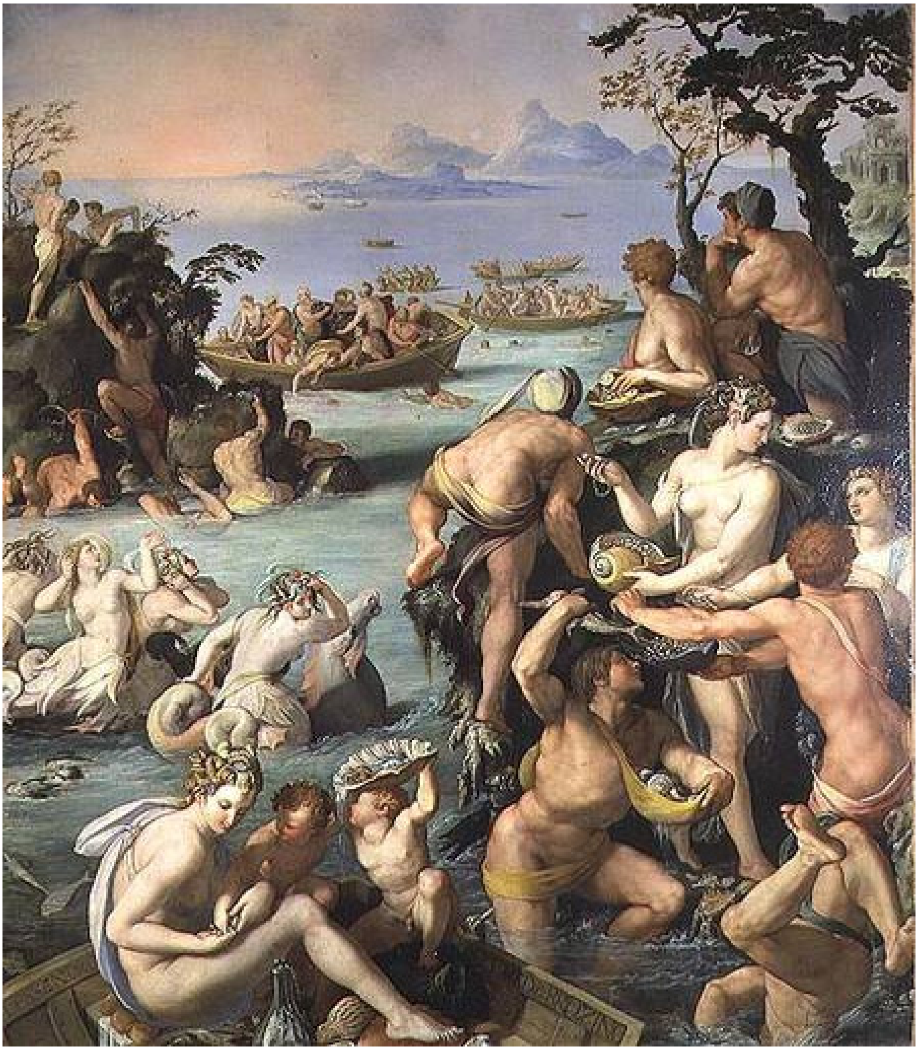
It is true modern fins are made of rubber or plastic which wasn't available hundreds of years ago. But in the past a mono fin could have been made of thin wood, like Benjamin Franklin had done, or made up with a frame of thin tree branches with cloth or leather stretched between. Many modern mono fins are made of fibreglass or carbon fibre and are very stiff, and not liable to bend like flippers made of rubber. These would be as stiff as a mono fin made of wood.

Any outsider seen a women diver with a mono fin could therefore think that she does have a fish tail. We also have to remember that in some mermaid stories there are mermaids with two tails. Like today with modern divers, some divers prefer to have two fins on each leg while others like the mono fin. The same could have been true of mermaids in the past.

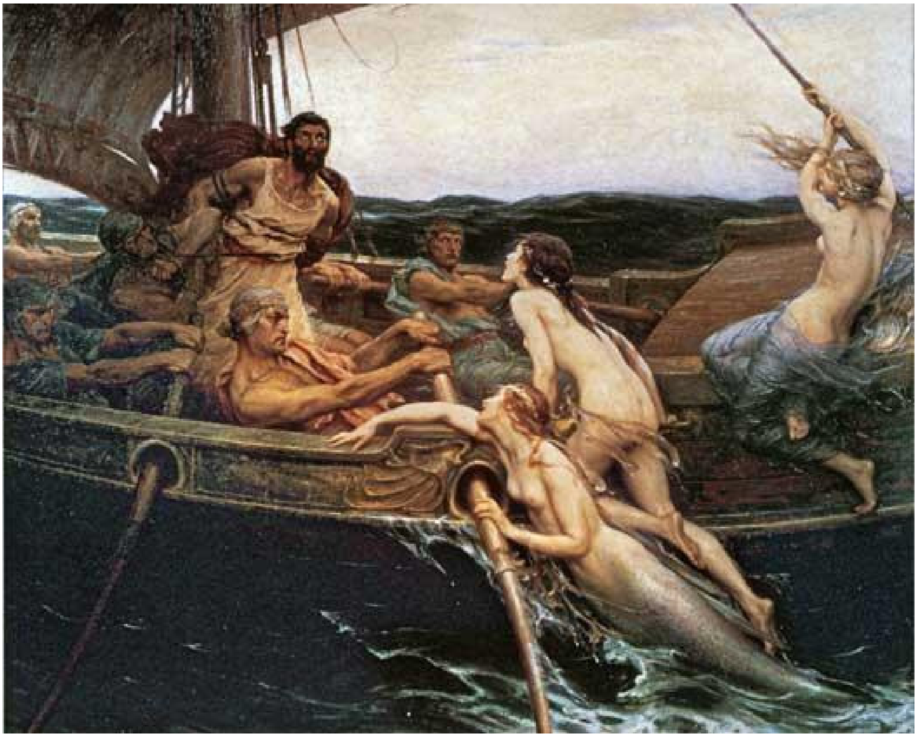
It can be seen that the use of mono fins might have been the origin of the belief that mermaids had fish tails: as the mermaid communities were wiped out their knowledge of flippers and mono fins died with them, only to be reinvented in the 20th century.

Some freedivers also have extra long flippers, again they claim this helps them to swim powerfully without too much effort. Flippers like this could have been made in the past using thin wood, perhaps split from sapling and then adzed to the required shape and thickness. Thin wood can be remarkably flexible though not as bendy as rubber. (split wood is stronger than wood ripped down by a power saw, because the split will follow the grain of the wood. While wood cut down the grain with a saw, can cut across the grain, causing a weakness in the wood). In some mermaid legends it is claimed that mermaids have serpent tails. If ancient divers discovered what modern freedivers know today that long flippers give them more power. Again an outsider observing a mermaid with extremely long flippers may think she has a serpent's tail.

Photo taken by Aquaxel of an underwater swimmer using very long flippers which Freedivers uses from. - http://www.flickr.com/photos/20079415@N00/136539966/



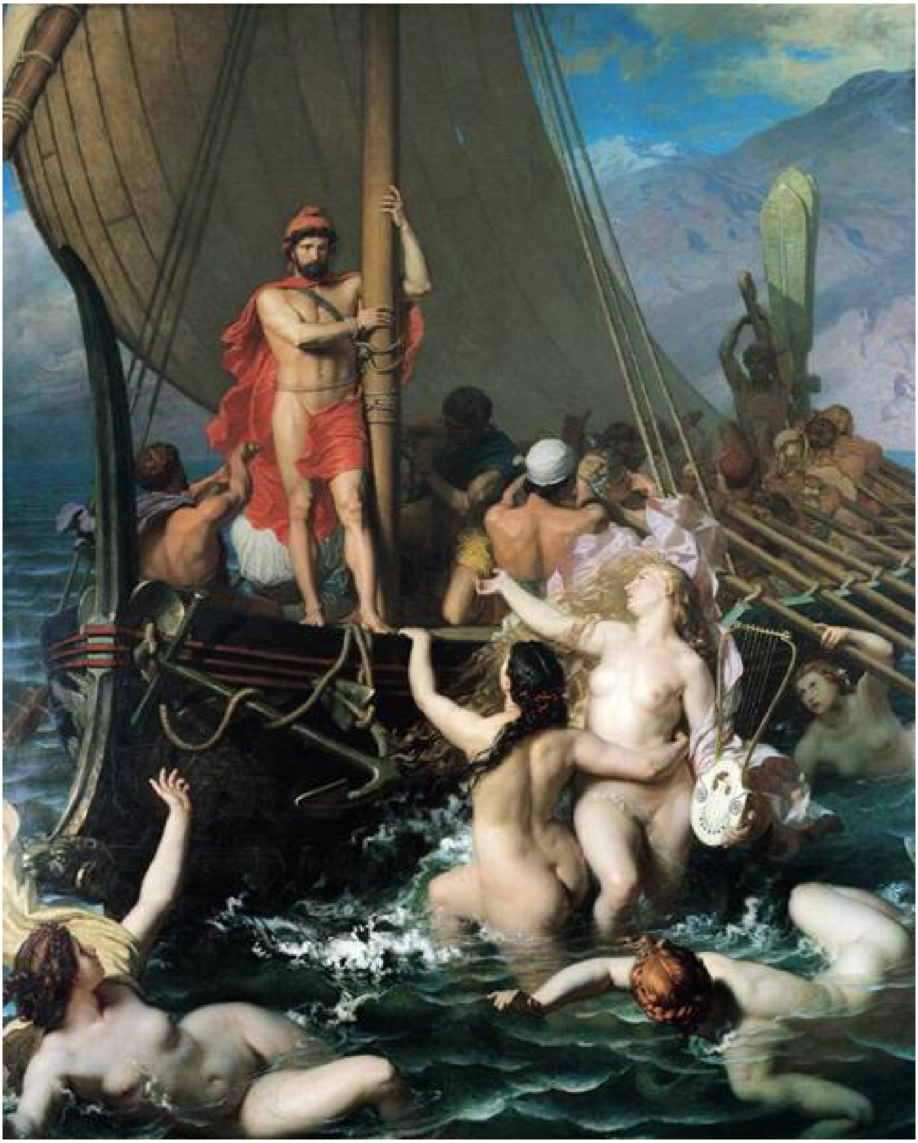
The above painting by Alessandro Allori, (1535-1607) is called, "The Pearl Fishers". What is mysterious about this picture is that some of the women in the water have mermaid tails. Does this mean that the artist knows the Mermaid code and is trying to hint that Pearl Fishers and mermaids are the same people? It could be that the artist may have painted a scene not out of his imagination but from real life, only adding the fish or serpent tail to some of the people, to give the impression he was painting a mythical scene. Thereby ensuring his picture will not be censored and destroyed. Pearl Fishers would have been breath-holding divers in his day and probably dived nude. (As Greek Sponge divers had done up until the 19th century). They may have used both male and female divers. Though even in the warm Mediterranean Sea modern professional scuba divers still wear wet suits as they can suffer hypothermia if they stay in the water too long. So even in these waters women divers would still have the advantage.



In the dramatic picture above; by Herbert James Draper, (1863 - 1920) called "Ulysses and the Sirens". Draper seems to have taken many liberties with the story: sirens, in Greek mythology, were supposed to be half bird and half women and in no part of the story did they come aboard Ulysses's boat. There is another problem with the picture; we see one siren looking like a traditional mermaid, with a fish's tail; the other two are simply ordinary women.

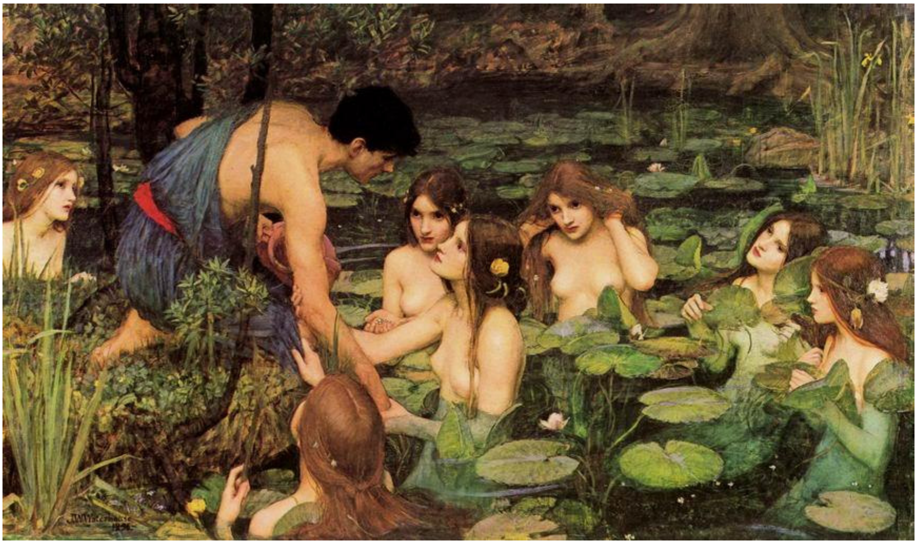
The conventional explanation for this would be that mermaids magically obtain legs when they come out the water, and anyway painting sirens is another excuse to paint nude women, so painting a women who is half a bird wouldn't be so exciting. Also Draper had to have the sirens come aboard the boat so he could have Ulysses, his crew and the sirens, all in the same picture. So it is just another case of "artistic license" to create a dramatic picture. But there could be another explanation for this picture.

Like the painting "The Pearl Fishers" by Alessandro Allori or the Victorian Book illustration at the beginning of the chapter, Draper could be hinting that mermaids and sirens were simply women divers, because he has a mythical mermaid, and normal women in the same picture, suggesting that the mythical mermaids were just ordinary women. (Though in the case of the Victorian book illustration the same thing is suggested by detaching the Mermaid tail from her body, which suggests that mermaids did not really have fishes tails.) So it could be saying in his picture that sirens, mermaids and women divers are all the same people. Draper and Allori are not the only artists to hint at this, we can see other similar themes in many other pictures by artists.



The above painting by Leon-Auguste-Adolphe Belly, (1827 - 1904) is also called "Ulysses and the sirens", yet he doesn't portray the sirens as either women with fish's tails or as half bird and half women. He just shows them as normal women swimming in the sea. Again, he is showing us the true nature of mermaid, sirens and nymphs. Even though the conventional explanation for this picture would be that artists probably painted mermaids as an excuse to paint nude women.

Unlike Draper he doesn't even bother to have at least one Siren with fish's tail or turned their lower legs into fish's tails like the "Little Mermaid" statue. He simply shows the ordinary women swimming in the sea. So he was again is he saying the same thing as other artists? What we think of as sirens that are half bird and half women or mermaids, which are half fish and half women, are in truth not mythical or magical creatures but ordinary women who dive for a living.

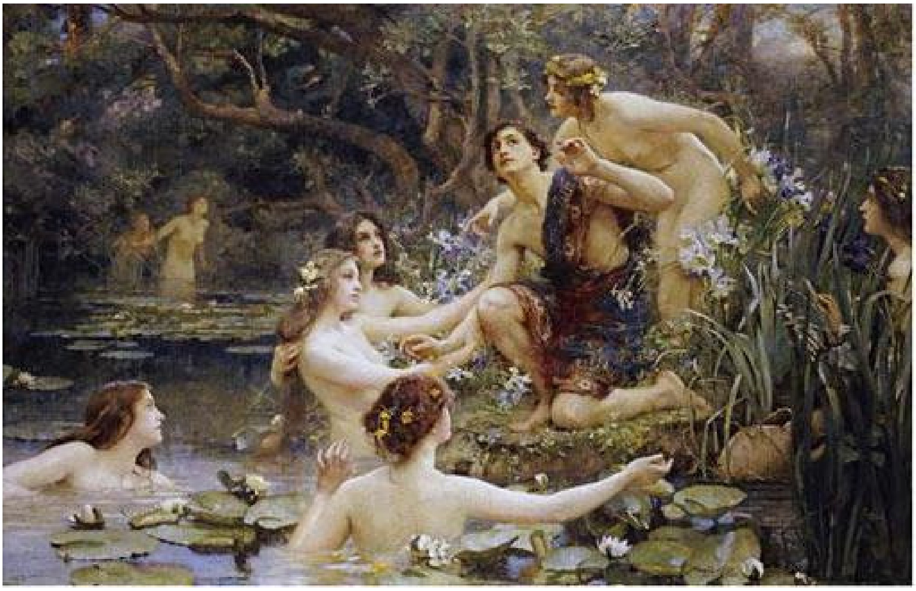


The above painting by John William Waterhouse, (1849-1917) is called "Hylas and the nymphs". What is portrayed in this painting was probably very true to life in ancient times, water lilies have large editable seeds, so the nymphs were probably foraging in the water for these seeds.

To quote the book *Facing The Ocean* by Barry Cunliffe, where he writes about archaeological findings of the Mesolithic age, around the many estuaries along the coast of Europe. -

These aquatic and maritime environments were immensely productive of readily available food. The swamps and marshes could produce grasses like Glyceria fluitans (A kind of wild rice) and the club rush (Scirpus Lacustris) with its highly nutritious seed, stems, and tubers, as well as a range of other floating water plants such as the cresses, water chestnuts, and water lilies. In the more exposed littoral zone edible plants included sea parsnip, sea fennel, sea rocket, and sea kale as well, of course, as a range of delicious edible seaweeds rich in health-giving minerals. To these plant resources may be added the huge range of bird inhabiting the marshes and the estuaries, the shellfish and crustaceans, and a wide variety of fish, as well as sea mammals notable seals and stranded whales.

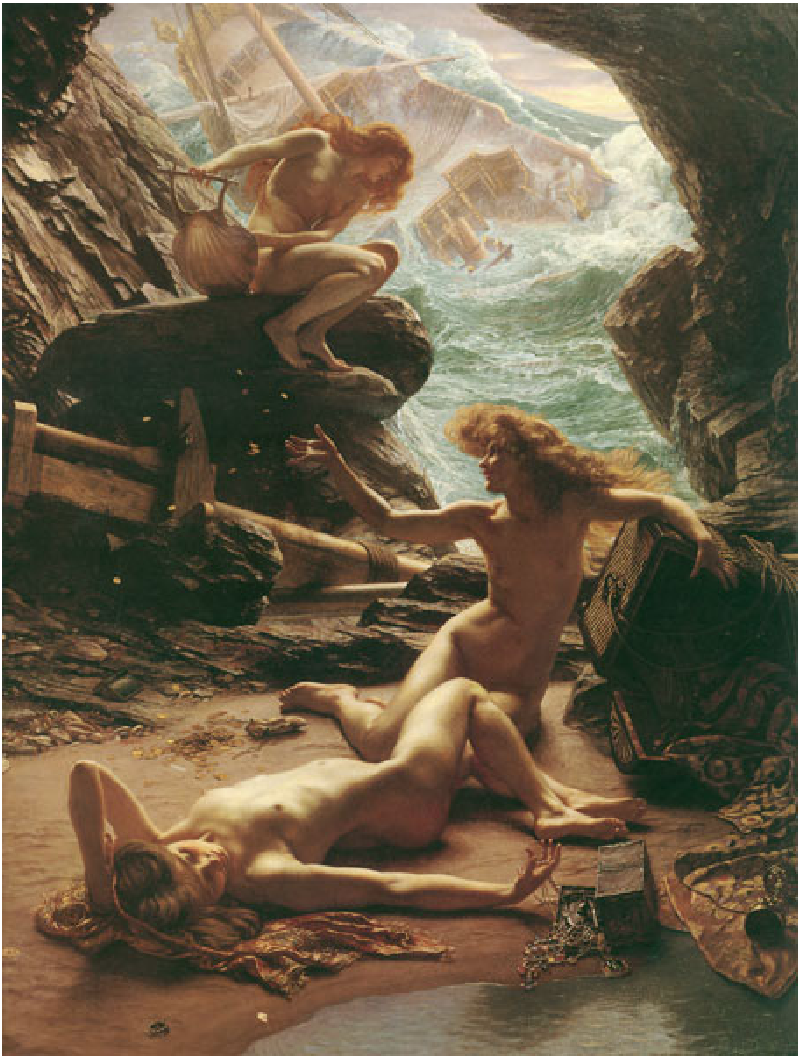
There were far more water habitats in ancient times in Europe than today. There were salt-water marshes along the coastal regions, and many large fresh water mashes inland. For instance the area around Glastonbury, (where the Isle of Avalon is suppose to be), was once swamplands, until it was drained in the 17th century and a sea wall was constructed to keep back the sea. The same is true of the Iceni lands in the Fens of Norfolk, when Queen Boudica led her bloody revolt against Rome. After her final defeat, the Romans tried to drain the fens but were unsuccessful other attempts were also made during the middle ages, but this wasn't finally accomplished until 19th century. Though what happened to the people living in the Fens is never talked about. It seems this happened throughout Europe where the mermaid people were driven from these wetlands, to allow farmers to come in and constructed dykes and drained the marshes.



The painting by Henrietta Rae (1859 - 1928) is again called; "Hylas and the Water nymphs", What is interesting about this story is that it is the nymphs who take the initiative, in going after a man, which would be the opposite roles of men and women at the time when this picture was painted. This painting shows the nymphs as more aggressive than in the previous picture, as they seem to be dragging and pushing Hylas into the river. It is they, who seeing a beautiful man, lust after him, and are not afraid to take the initiative. This aggressive behaviour by nymphs has been written about in other Ancient Greek myths, suggesting a more dominant role for women in mermaid communities.

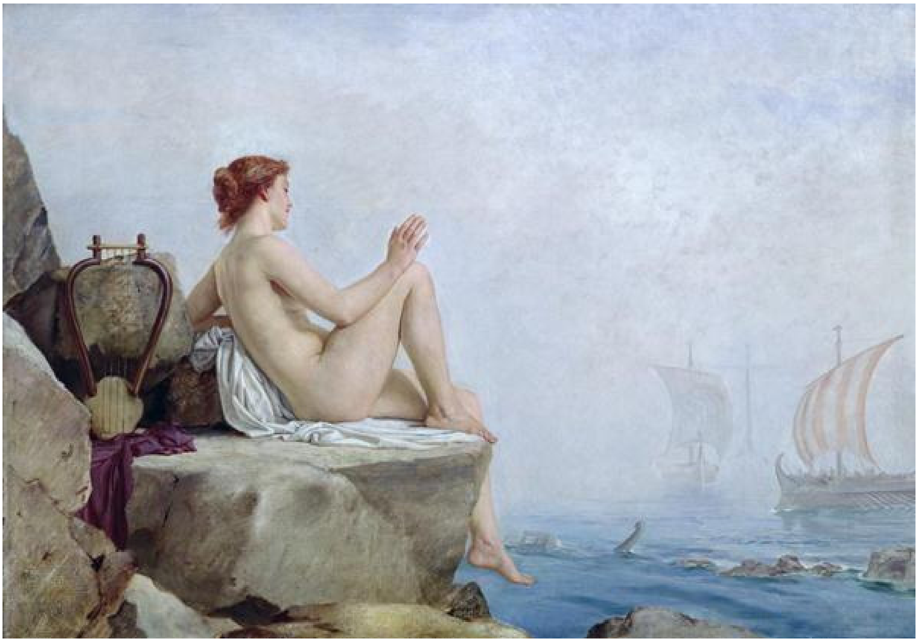
Again we see the nymphs among the water lilies, which they were probably harvesting. You can read more about the foods our ancestors gathered in the book, *Wild Food* by Ray Mears and Gordon Hillman. Where they demonstrate the huge variety of indigenous foods that can found in wetlands like; seashores, rivers, lakes and swamps.

Wetlands around rivers would have been increased, in the past, by the actions of beavers that would have dammed rivers and flooded forests. So they would benefit mermaid people giving them a wider area in which to forage for food. But farmers do not like beavers for the same reason as these beaver dams caused their crops to be flooded and for this reason, persecuted them to extinction in Britain. Even today in USA there is still conflict between farmers and beavers where farmers will blow up beaver dams with dynamite if beavers construct a dam on a river running through the farmer's land. Fortunately today there are now conservation laws to protect the beaver or farmers would hunted them to extinction like they once done in Britain. The European beaver still survives though they did once become close to extinction.

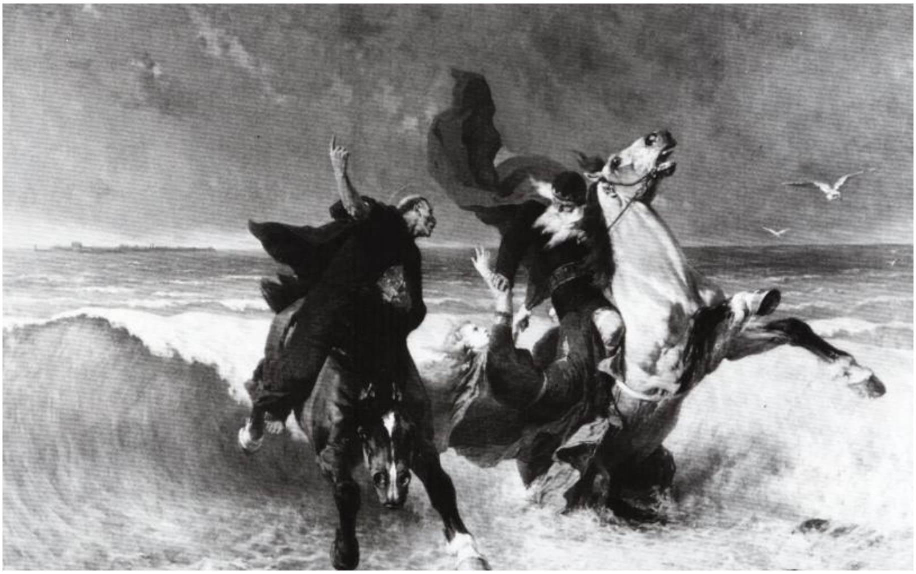


This painting by Sir Edward John Poynter, (1836 – 1919) is called; “The Cave of the Storm nymphs”, showing nymphs enjoying wreaking a ship, (which can be seen sinking in the background). This painting is clearly claiming that the mermaids are also wreakers as they have with them valuable items they looted from the ship. Nymphs were from ancient Greece, while the sinking ship is from the 18th century. Which does suggest that people were calling women divers nymphs as well as mermaids at that time.

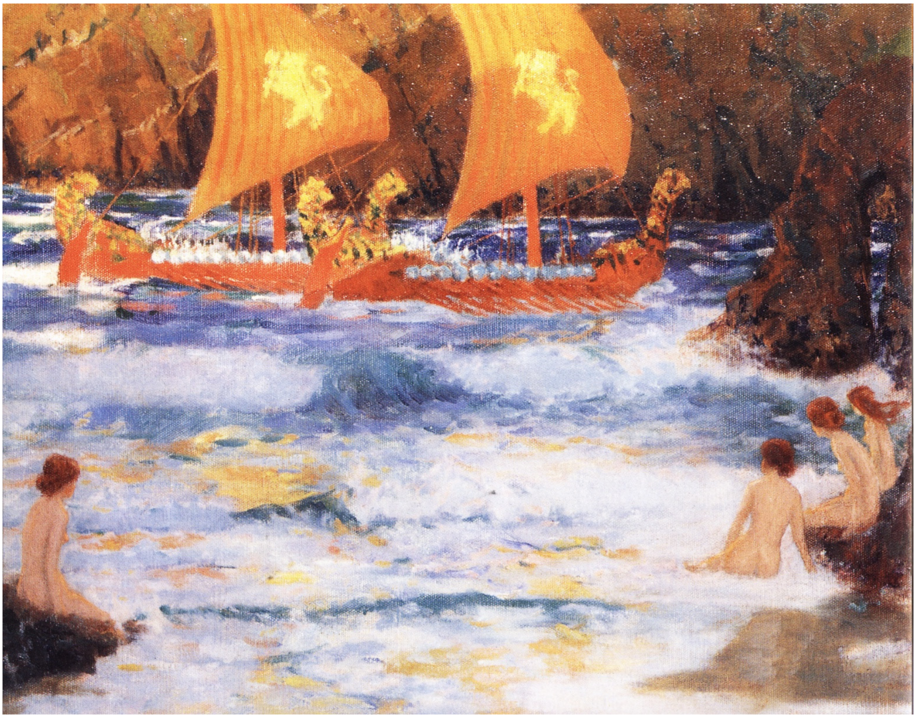
The painting is probably a part of The Christian propaganda. Portraying the sea-people in much the same way as condemned witches. Claiming them to be very evil and malevolence women. Because witches, mermaids sirens and nymphs were all at one time the same peoples. It suggests many of the mermaids were caught up in the witch-hunts of the Middle Ages, and were hung or burn to death for no other reason than being breadwinners of their community.



Painting by Edward Armitage called “The Siren”, 1888. Again the artist paints a siren or mermaid like an ordinary woman but she is depicted as enjoying luring the crew of ships to their doom. Which is so unlikely that it is laughable. This picture is obviously an excuse to paint a nude woman.



Painting by Evariste-Vital Luminais (1822-1896), showing King Grallon fleeing as the sea floods the city of Ker Is. In the story a holy man strikes down the king’s daughter Dahut who supposed to have opened the gates of the dyke. She later became a mermaid, and also lures sailors to their doom to weak their ships on the shore. This is Christian propaganda against the Sea-People. In the same way the Church depicted Witches as evil women, justifying their slaughter.



[The above painting by Julius Olssen, (1848 – 1942) called, "The Coast of Sirens", shows two vessels, (which looks a bit like Viking ships) coming dangerously close to shore, because of the naked women divers they want to look at, sitting on the rocks. The young sailors would typically want to gawk at the naked women they see, resting between dives. They even might be lured by the sound of their singing, knowing that the people singing would be nude women. They would bring their boats close inshore to have a closer look.

To be too close to a rocky shore is a most dangerous position for any sailboat. Some of them could wreck themselves, on hidden rocks or sandbars just below the surface. Or get caught on a lee shore by a change of wind blowing towards the land or get caught a strong gust of wind making their ship temporary uncontrollable, with little room to manoeuvre. Typically, these sailors would blame the women divers, and not their own foolishness, for their misfortune. It seems that some went as far as claiming that the mermaids deliberately lured them to come close inshore through their singing and open nudity.]

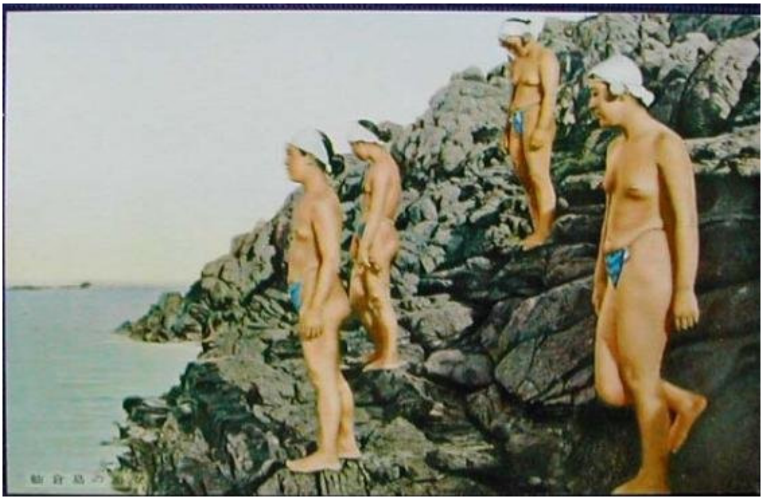
Photograph of ama divers resting and sitting on rocks from Japanese web site
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

The scene is probably exactly the same as mermaids resting on rocks in Europe. The problem of boats coming too close inshore to see naked women didn't happen in Japan, simply because up until the late 20th century public nudity was acceptable in Japanese society.

The problems of public nudity could only be an issue where you have two societies living side by side with very different social values. In mermaid communities public nudity would be perfectly acceptable as they lived a lifestyle where clothing was impracticable. Whereas, in the wider community, because of the influence of the Christian Church, public nakedness was seen as shameful and later became unlawful. So young men in fishing boats and coastal traders who would have never seen unashamed naked women before, would want to gawk at unclothed mermaids sitting on rocks. Putting themselves and their ships in danger.

Photograph of ama divers in some sort of dispute. From Japanese web-site. –
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

This photograph shows the free and easy attitude Japanese society once had about nudity, with topless women working in a harbour. Unfortunately Western influences and morality have changed all this and now Japanese ama divers swim with cotton clothing.

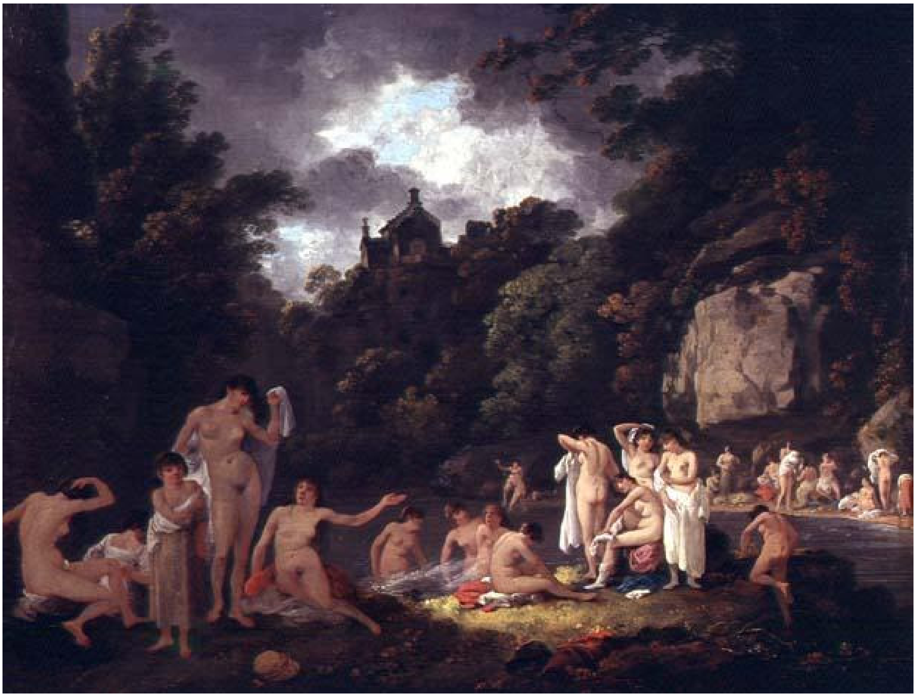


Photograph of ama divers. From Japanese web-site-
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html

[The ama divers seem to be in meditation or prayer. There are reports of both ama and haenyo doing this before they dive in the sea. As modern freedivers have discovered, meditation and relaxation are very important for learning to hold their breath underwater for a long time. This is because the heart slows down when a person is relaxed, which allows the body to use up less oxygen while underwater. Perhaps the origins of mediation came from women divers and only later did Yogis and spiritual people discovered other benefits of doing meditation.

For women to do prayer and meditation naked wouldn't be a problem in Japan as Shinto is the state religion, but it seems the Christian Church do not like nudity in religious ceremonies. One of the Church's accusations against the witches was that they performed religious ceremonies naked, which the Church condemned as 'immoral'. So it suggests that mermaids has similar practices and prayed and meditated before they began diving. This then is another connection between witches and mermaids.

The ban on nudity by the Christian Church might have been a reaction against witches and mermaids. As I will explain in a later chapter to get their bodies assimilated to cold water the mermaids have to get used to the cold most of the time. So putting on warm clothing and living in warm houses would be counterproductive in their effort to get their bodies use to the cold water. For this reason mermaid not only swam naked but probably wore very little clothing while living on land as well. So clothing became an issue because the farmers and hunter/gathers had a different attitude about clothing. The farming people had clothing to keep themselves warm, while the mermaids or witches hardly wore anything, and this was the most noticeable difference between the two communities. When the two communities came into conflict over the use of land, after the farming people began to drain the wetlands. The farmers may of justified their actions of destroying the mermaid people's way of life, by condemning them as, pagans and 'naked savages'. This attitude continued when Europeans invaded Africa, America and Australia where again they were to condemn the natives as 'naked savages'. So the conflict between the mermaids and farming people may be the origins of the hang-up people of the Western world have about nudity. Clearly Christian missionaries saw the open nudity of other cultures as very offensive and worked hard at clothing them.]

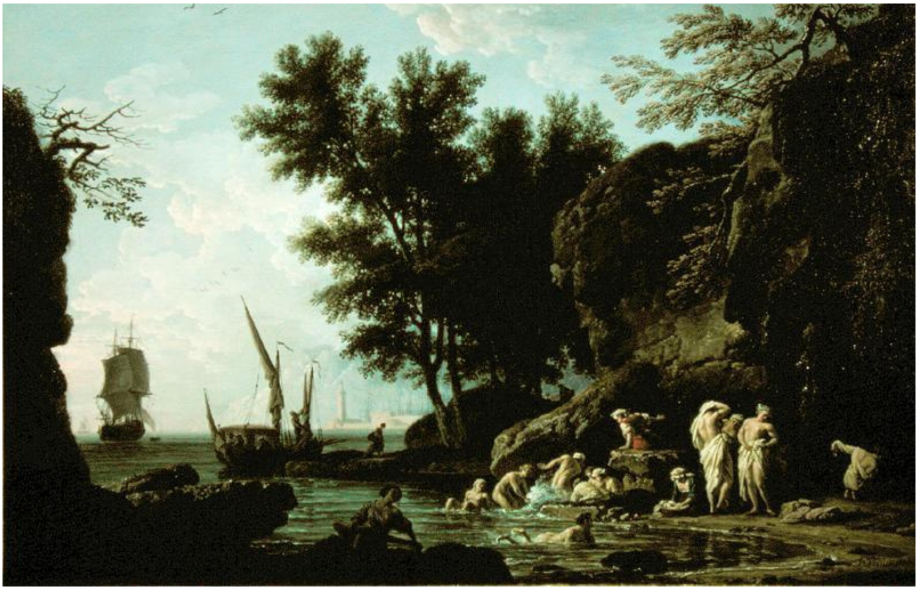


[This painting by Julius Caesar Ibbetson, (1759 - 1817) is called, "The Mermaids' Haunt". Again we find these mermaids are ordinary women and even though most of them are naked, they have clothing with them, and seem to be getting dressed after swimming and diving for food. Some of them seem to be washing salt of their bodies in a stream.

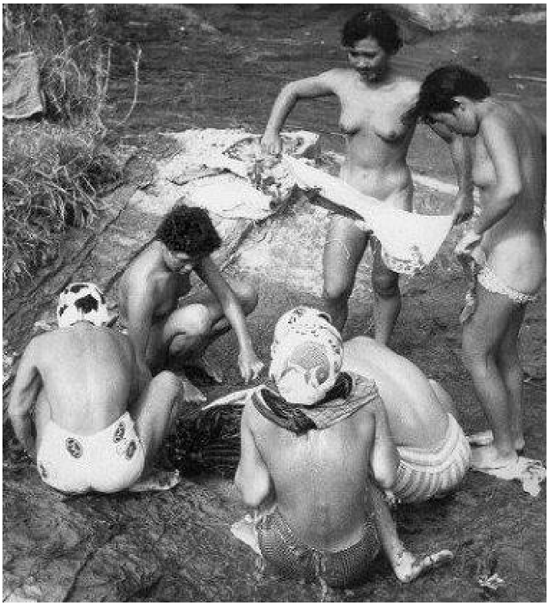
This painting only makes sense if the artist knew that mermaids were women who worked in the sea like today's ama divers. This painting is not a fanciful and mythical scene of the imagination but a real event witnessed by the artist, because Ibbetson is famous for painting contemporary real life scenes. Mermaid reports have continued right up to the 19th century and they still may of existed in the artist's lifetime. Though by this time these women would be practicing their trade in secret. This is supported by the fact that the artist calls the place where the mermaids are, a haunt. Which suggests a secret place. This is also suggested in the picture, which shows in the background a dark forest growing up the side of a cliff, which may be difficult to find for anyone not familiar with the area. What is surprising about this painting, and other paintings shown in this book, is that the artist is explicitly showing us that mermaids are ordinary women, as he calls them mermaids and yet doesn't paint women with fish tails. The artist cannot be more unambiguous in what he is attempting to say through his painting.

Yet because people are so firmly convince that mermaids are women with fish's tails and therefore a mythical or magical creature, they cannot see the message that the artist is so plainly telling them. Because of censorship, writers could not record what happened in these mermaid communities before they died out, but a few artists did managed to paint them. They probably got away with this, because pictures of naked mermaids would be a popular subject matter for many of the rich and politically powerful clients of these artists.]

[Picture of Ama divers washing salt of their bodies like in Julius Caesar Ibbetson's painting "The Mermaids' Haunt". Photograph from web-site - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html]



[This painting by Claude Joseph Vernet, (born 1714 died 1789) is called "Nymphs Bathing In The Morning". The problem with this painting is that it has a contemporary 18th century ship in the background so clearly this is not a picture of nymphs in ancient Greece. Again the artist is not known for painting imaginary pictures of Greek gods and goddesses or scenes from the Bible but only painted real life landscapes and people. This then is a real life picture of sea people women getting dressed after collecting seafood from the sea floor. So women must of being doing this at the time the picture was painted.]



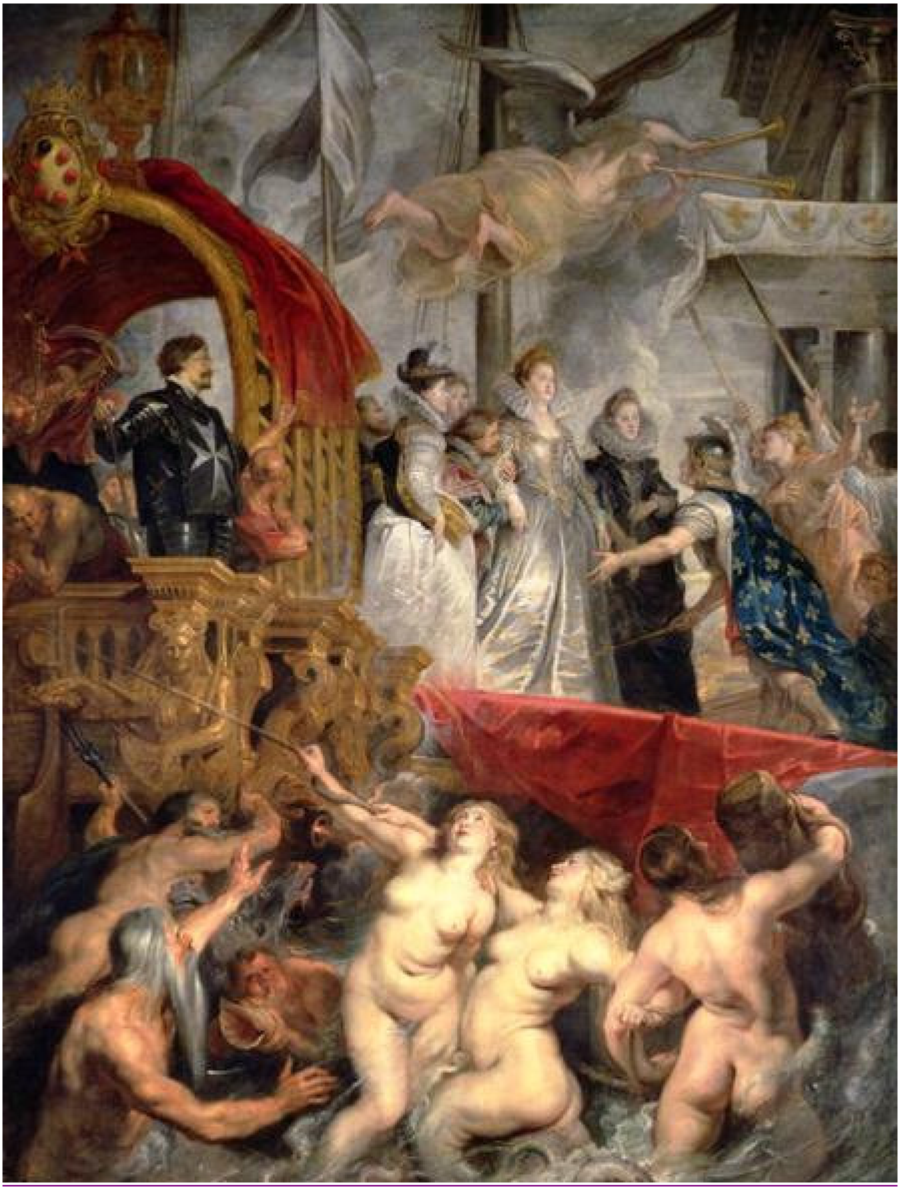
Ama divers either publicly getting dress or undressed like the nymphs in Claude Joseph Vernet's painting or the mermaids of Julius Caesar Ibbetson's picture.

Taken from Japanese website. –http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.htm

Ama women warming themselves by a fire after they have finished diving for the day. From web-site - http://library.osu.edu/sites/rarebooks/japan/2_14_photos.html

Amas climbing back into boat, from web-site –

http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html



[This is another curious painting, by Peter Paul Rubens, (1577-1640). It is called, "The Debarkation at Marseilles" of Marie-de'-Medici, (The wife of Henri IV). As other commentators have pointed out; what is strange about this painting is that it is dominated by the three naked women at the bottom of the picture, who are suppose to be Naiads or sirens. Now, Naiads come from Ancient Greece, and were its original inhabitants and are similar to nymphs. Rubens painted the bottom of their legs like they are serpent tails, suggesting they are also mermaids. While the old man alongside them is suppose to be the god Neptune. Which is also strange, as he seems to be a small, insignificant figure for a god.

The normal interpretation for this painting is that Rubens has surrounded Merie de'-Rubens with mythical creature like the Angel blowing her horn. But another interpretation could be that that the naked people at the bottom of the picture were not mythical creatures but real people. If knowledge of mermaids and the sea people were being censored at the time, Rubens may have taken the opportunity of painting mermaids, he himself had seen, and put them in a commissioned painting of a very important person. He even had the cheek to put the mermaids in the foreground and so made the mermaids larger figures than the V.I.Ps we was commissioned to paint. Suggesting that he was more interested in the mermaids than them.]

Not only painters hinted at the true nature of Mermaids but poets did as well as we can see in the following poem by Matthew Arnold.

The Forsaken Merman by Matthew Arnold. 1822–1888

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shoreward blow;
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away.
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go.
Call once yet.
In a voice that she will know:
'Margaret! Margaret!'
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain.
Surely she will come again.
Call her once and come away.
This way, this way!
'Mother dear, we cannot stay.'
The wild white horses foam and fret.
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down.
Call no more.

One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore.
Then come down.
She will not come though you call all day.
Come away, come away.
Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail, and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea.
She said, 'I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee.'
I said, 'Go up, dear heart, through the waves.
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves.'
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say.

Come,' I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town.
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold-blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her dear:
'Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.
Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone.
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'
But, ah! she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Came away, children, call no more.
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down;
Down to the depths of the sea.
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: 'O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy.
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessèd light of the sun.'
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

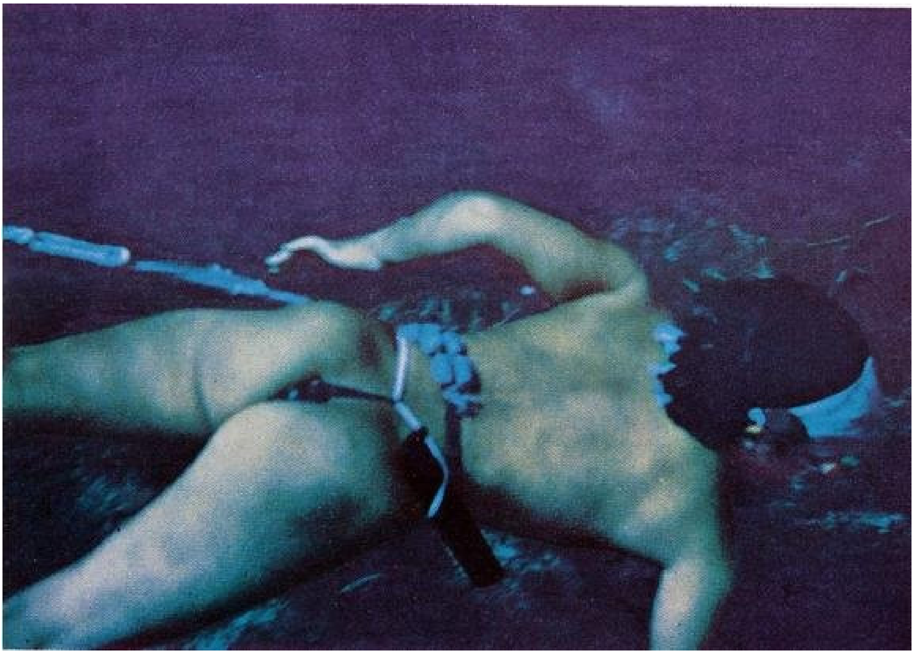
Come away, away, children.

Come children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, 'Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she:
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea.'

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow;
When clear falls the moonlight;
When spring-tides are low:
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom:
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing, 'There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she.
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea.'

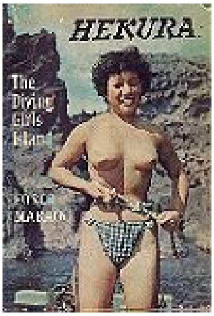
Now what is made very clear in this poem is that no-one can be a mermaid or merman and at the same time be a Christian. Suggesting that the Sea People remained pagans right up to the 19th century, when this poem was written. Again there is no mention of mermaids or mermen having fish’s tails, and in the poem, and the merman and his children walked up to the Church to in an attempt to bring the children’s mother back. Something that would have been impossible if they had fish tails

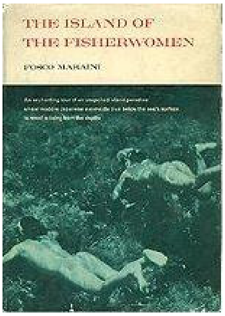
Also of interest is the hold the Church had over the people, although Margaret did go to live with the sea-people, she was still indoctrinated as a child into believing she would lose her soul if she done this. And it was the fear of losing her soul that forced her leave her husband and children and return to the religion of her childhood. The poet at that end of the poem called her cruel for leaving her family and referred to Sea People, “kings of the sea”, suggesting where his sympathies lay. Though the real cruel people are the Church, who brainwash children to have such fearful beliefs. In 19th century Britain the poet probably felt inhibited to make such open criticism of the Church, by pointing this out.



Underwater photograph of ama diver with trailing rope tied around her waist. From Japanese web site. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html

Some ama divers have died when these ropes have been caught up in rocks. This is even more dangerous now because the ropes are made of unbreakable plastic. (Amas don’t carry knifes in which they can cut the rope as knifes are unnecessary for their general work). There have been old painting and drawings in Japan and Korea showing that like the women divers of the Orkney Islands, ama and haenyo divers did at one time wear petticoats. These trailing petticoats not only would be a drag, slowing down the speed of the swimmer but a real danger if caught up in rocks. This is what women divers have had to put up with to fit in with the ‘moral codes’ of landlubbers. Even in modem times ama and haenyo divers have been made to cover up again. I will discuss this more in the next chapter.





Chapter Two - The True Nature Of Mermaids

The first time most people in the western world were aware of women divers in the East was the publication of the book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* by Fosco Maraini in 1962. It was published in the USA in the same year, under the title; *The Island Of The Fisherwomen*. (Both books can be seen above.) This book created a sensation, because of its many pictures of half-naked women divers, but also because it informed people of a hard physical job than women could do better than men.

The photographs in the book also gave the wrong impression that ama divers, in modern times only worked in skimpy g-strings, and were all young and pretty. But many ama divers work up to their 70s and in the latter part of the 20th century ama divers have had to wear clothing.

This book influenced Ian Fleming, who travelled to Japan to see ama divers in action. Then in his book *You Only Live Twice* he created the love interest for James Bond in an ama diver called Kissy Suzuki. This wasn’t the first time Ian Fleming had a woman diver in his books. In *Dr No*, he had a woman diver called Honey Ryder, who again was romantically involved with James Bond, and made a living diving for shellfish, totally naked. (Ursula Andress played this role in the film, unfortunately in a bikini). It is of interest that the book was set in the West Indies where Ian Fleming lived, it could be that he knew of women divers still doing this job in the 1950s.

Back in the 19th century ama divers worked naked, and as this was a tradition in these fishing villages this wasn’t a problem, but tourism changed all that. In 1893, Kokichi Mikimoto discovered how to create cultured pearls and used ama divers to look after the oysters. But his oyster farm also attracted tourists who were shocked at the ama diver’s open nakedness. So Mikimoto designed a cotton costume for the ama divers to wear that covered the whole body. Then after the Second World War, many of the occupying troops coming into the coastal villages saw the ama divers working without clothing and this caused problems, so the ama divers were made to cover-up. This is still true today in areas where there are tourists. In the late 1950s when Fosco Maraini wanted to film ama divers he had problems in finding ama divers not affected by tourism, he had to go to the remote island of Hekura to find real working female divers, who had not yet been forced to cover-up.

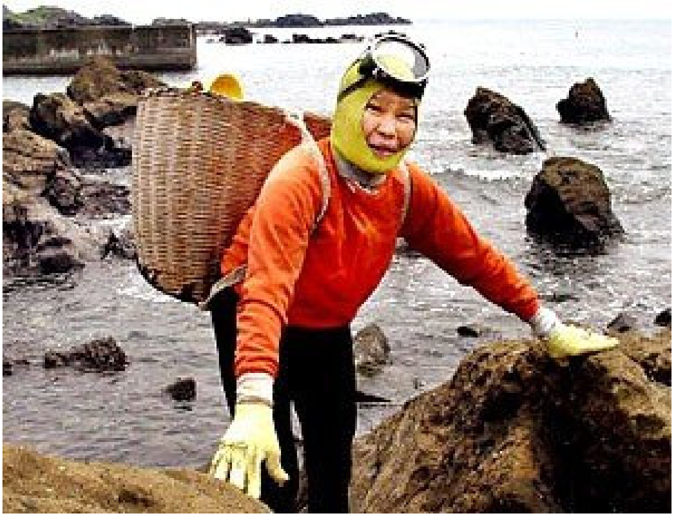
The problem is that these cotton costumes create drag when swimming in the water. Also, it cannot be a good idea to have wet clothing on, when coming out of the water. On cold windy days it would make the body far colder than wearing nothing. Dr. Jolie Bookspan, who dived with the ama divers using their cotton clothing, discovered this. She found that not only was the wet cotton clothing colder out of the water, it was uncomfortable and difficult to change and keep clean. She found diving without clothing a lot easier. The ama divers told her they could better tolerate the cold, without either clothing or wet suits.

So why do the ama still continue to wear such impractical clothing? It could be they don’t want to be seen as naked bimbos, and want to be looked upon as serious workwomen. But more than this; they may see wearing very unglamorous clothing as a protection from being pestered for sex, or even being raped, by outsiders.

Australian Anthropologist Josephine Wright who lived among the women divers of Cheju, gives another point of view on this. She reported that the divers of the younger generation didn’t like the older divers talking about the times when they dived naked as young women. This was because people in Korean society who don’t like haenyo divers, denigrate them, by claiming that nudity proves that they are backward and underdeveloped. This criticism is so strongly felt by the young haenyo divers that some insisted that Josephine Wright should wear both a singlet and underwear under her wetsuit, because they feared being called old fashion, if it was known that some were naked under their wet suit. (Criticism like this is similar to what mermaids once had from Christian Church, where many cried having receiving verbal abuse from these priests. The Church also made an issue about the nakedness of mermaids).

Josephine Wright also makes the point that on a eighteenth-century Korean Map that also shows Cheju women divers at work in the sea, that have white cloth outfits that are seen today by Ama divers in Japan when they show their skills to tourists. She goes on to speculate that perhaps both ama and haenyo divers have had to dress up in times when there has been social pressure against them, like today. Or were able to undress, which is more practicable for swimming underwater, when changing social environments allowed it. Another point is that working outdoors without clothes, for long periods, makes the skin go darker, for Japanese and Chinese people, so keeping covered up allows the skin to be lighter and won’t identify ama divers as working women. This is probably why some modern ama divers not only cover their bodies but faces as well.

Another reason for wearing cotton is that in some parts of Japan ama divers are allowed to wear wet suits, but this seems to allow male divers to



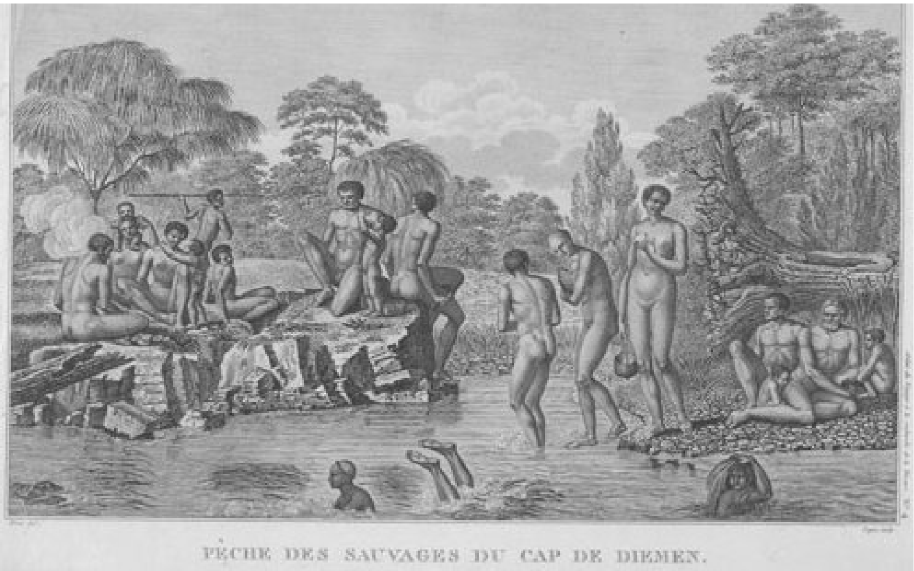
Photograph of Kotoyo Motohashi 68, on a seashore near Shirahama city, 100km southeast of Tokyo, she has been a diver since the age of 18. She is wearing the clothing modern ama divers now wear. Which is crazy, as no one in their right minds in the West would wear clothing like this, when going for a swim. In it only social pressure that forces ama divers to wear this very uncomfortable and impracticable clothing. It demonstrates just how tough ama women are, when ama women passed retirement age, will still swim in cold water and wear cold wet clothing, out of the water. Photo taken by Francois Kadri. Taken from web-site. – http://www.thingsasian.com/stories-photos/2573

compete with women divers on equal terms. For centuries ama divers have successfully held out against the patriarchal influences of Japanese society, because they could do an important job better than men. Mostly because diving was the best way to collect Abolone considered to be a great delicacy, which made good money for the ama families. The introduction of the wet suits undermined the advantage women had over men in cold-water, resulting in men in wet suits also diving and collecting Abolone. So ama divers have got together in a strong sisterhood and successfully banned wet suits for ama diving in some parts of Japan. It seem that most men are not willing to wear the uncomfortable and impracticable cotton clothing, that makes the diver even more colder out of the water. Unfortunately, social pressures like this are making ama diving unattractive for the younger generation of Japanese women. As fewer and fewer of young people want to become ama divers. With the rise of feminism, many young women are finding they can make more money in less demanding jobs and professions.

There are reports of women diving in other parts of the world besides Japan and Korea In 1793 Rear Admiral Bruni D'Entrecasteaux, commanding the *Recherche*, and Captain Huon de Kermadec, commanding the

Photograph by Fosco Maraini from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* of a ama diver and her child

Esperance, explored Tasmania. They found the aboriginal people living there very friendly and observed the women diving for shellfish. They commented on how icy the waters were and how they were able to stay underwater for lengthy periods. At one time the aboriginals treated the French to a feast. The women collected the food by diving for shellfish, crayfish and editable seaweed and then cooked the food on fires while the male aboriginals sat down and done nothing. This behaviour shocked the French sailors who even attempted to encourage the men to help out, which they refused to do.


PÊCHE DES SAUVAGES DU CAP DE DIEMEN.

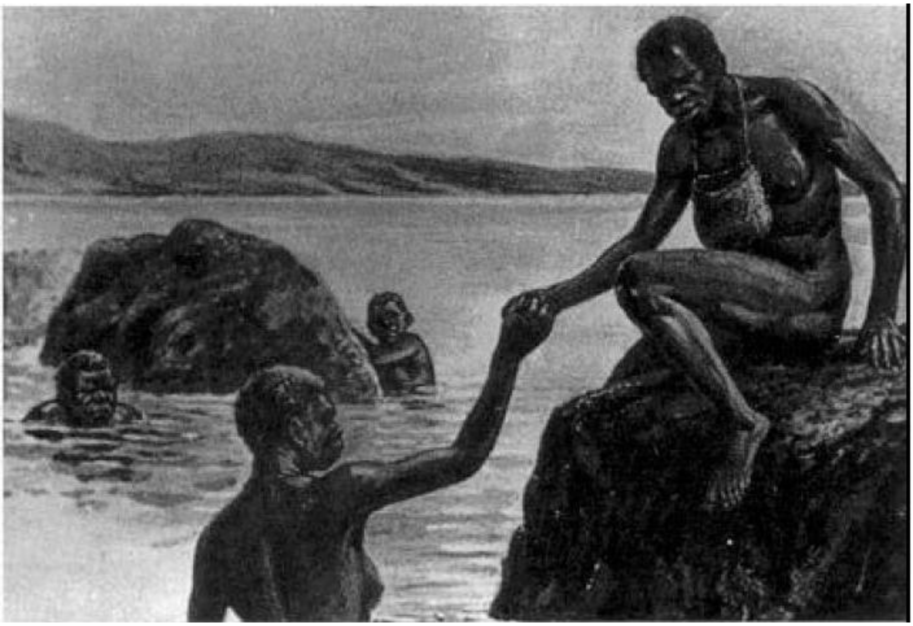
Drawing called; “Natives preparing a meal from the sea” Drawn by Jean Piron, an artist in the Rear Admiral Bruni D’Entrecasteaux French expedition to Tasmania. Engraving by Jacques Louis Copia, 1764-1799, in Atlas pour servir a la relation du voyage a la recherché de la Perouse, Paris: Chez Dabo, 1817, Plate 4. National Library of Australia. Note, the women diving in the foreground and cooking on a fire on the left of the picture.

The exploration of Tasmania by the French made it imperative for the English to settle in Tasmania before the French could claim it. They arrived in 1803 and they also observed aboriginal women diving for shellfish along the coast and in rivers, as well as their friendly and hospitable nature. Unfortunately the English settlers were not so friendly, and began to shoot Native Tasmanians from the time the first boatload of settlers arrived. The aboriginals were forced away from the coast to live in the woodlands. Away from the bountiful supply of food from the coast the Aboriginals started to kill the white settler’s livestock. This started a war, Aboriginal women were raped and tortured and their children used in forced labour while the men were shot. As UCLA professor, Jared Diamond, recorded. -

"*Tactics for hunting down Tasmanians included riding out on horseback to shoot them, setting out steel traps to catch them, and putting out poison flour where they might find and eat it. Shepherds cut off the penis and testicles of aboriginal men, to watch the men run a few yards before dying. At a hill christened Mount Victory, settlers slaughtered 30 Tasmanians and threw their bodies over a cliff. One party of police killed 70 Tasmanians and dashed out the children's brains.*

In 1828 the governor of Tasmania declared martial law, permitting Europeans to shoot on sight any aborigine found in European-settled areas.

That was followed by roving search-and-capture parties (five convicts of good character led by a field police constable) and by a bounty established in 1830 of £5 per Tasmanian adult, £2 per child.



Aborigine women diving for shell fish in Tasmania in the early 19th century. Sketch by Englishman D. Colbron Pearse. Note, the bag the woman on the rocks has around her neck. Native Tasmanians were considered so primitive that they were unable to make clothing, but the fact they could make woven bags suggests they had the skills to do this if they wanted to.

By 1830s only a few Native Tasmanian survived. Then George Augustus Robinson a bricklayer and Christian preacher decided to mount a friendly mission to help them. He made friends with half-cast aboriginals living in the towns who had relations still living in the bush. Somehow he convince them that he could be trusted and managed to talk with a aboriginal woman called Truganini who was the leader of the remaining aboriginals. He succeeded in forging a relocation agreement with her with promises of food, shelter, housing and freedom from persecution. She trusted him and led 300 aboriginals out of the bush into the hands of their enemies. They were all shipped out to Finder's Island but the conditions there was not what they were led to believe. To quote Jared Diamond again-

"On Flinders Island Robinson was determined to civilize and Christianize the survivors. His settlement--at a windy site with little fresh water--was run like a jail. Children were separated from parents to facilitate the work of civilizing them. The regimental daily schedule included Bible

reading, hymn singing, and inspection of beds and dishes for cleanness and neatness. However, the jail diet caused malnutrition, which combined with illness to make the natives die. Few infants survived more than a few weeks. The government reduced expenditures in the hope that the native would die out. By 1869 only Truganini, one other woman, and one man remained alive.

George Robinson it seems, did resign in protest at the lack of funding but doing so left the Native Tasmanians at the mercy of people who regarded them as little more than animals. Truganini ended up as the last full-blooded Tasmanian aboriginal alive. She died at the age of 73 in 1876, so she was born just before the first English settlers arrived and her lifetime she witnessed the complete destruction of her people. A settler stabbed her mother to death, and other settlers kidnapped her sister. Settlers also killed her intended partner by drowning him in her presents, as he tried to protect her and his murderers then raped her. The suffering of these peaceful people is unimaginable as some of the settlers invented extremely cruel and sadistic ways to ill treat and kill them.

One of the justifications of the genocide of the original people of Tasmania was that they were that they were the most primitive and backward people on the planet. This has been a 'scientific fact' since the 19th century and even Jared Diamond as a scientist has accepted this, when he wrote –

Unlike mainland Aboriginal Australians, Tasmanians couldn't start a fire; they had no boomerangs, spear throwers, or shields; they had no bone tools, no specialized stone tools, and no compound tools like an axe head mounted on a handle; they couldn't cut down a tree or hollow out a canoe; they lacked sewing to make sewn clothing, despite Tasmania's cold winter climate with snow; and, incredibly, though they lived mostly on the sea coast, the Tasmanians didn't catch or eat fish. How did those enormous gaps in Tasmanian material culture arise?

This is the prevailing view of many scientists who have studied Tasmanian Aborigine culture but their reasoning seemed to be still strongly influenced by 19th century sexism and racialism. To disparage the Native Tasmanians like this, under the disguise of, 'objective science' is to add insult to injury. It suggests a very strong bias against the Native Tasmanians to suggest they were incapable of making fire, spear throwers, stone tools, clothing, and watercraft.

The French sailors of the *Recherche* and the *Esperance* had observed the Native Tasmanian women using fire to cook their meals. It is true that Australian aborigines have been observed both in Tasmania and on the mainland carrying fire around with them. Yet because of this, no one has accused the mainland aboriginal as incapable of lighting fires, so why make this distinction with the Tasmanian aborigine? In the damper conditions of Tasmania it would be more difficult to light fires than in the drier conditions of the mainland, so it would make sense, to carry fire around with them, but in no-way is this proof that they lacked the knowledge to make fire. Also if the Native Tasmanians were incapable of lighting fires how did they get fire in the first place? Did they just wait for bush-fires created by lighting strikes, and then keep the fire going until this happened again? The whole idea is absurd.

Criticism of the fact that they didn't use boomerangs and spear throwers is another example of bias. These weapons would be very useful to hunt kangaroos and emus on the open plains of Australia. They wouldn't be much use in Tasmania, which was still mostly woodland, when the first Europeans arrived. Throw a boomerang in a forest and you will only hit a tree, while a spear thrower is used to throw a spear a long way, which again would be useless in woodland, where you cannot see further than the trees or bushes in front of you.

Shields are made of vegetable material so wouldn't be preserved in the archaeological record as they would rot away. They would have been totally useless in their war against the white settlers, as they cannot stop a musket ball or rifle bullet, so they wouldn't have been used. Also shields are only used in intertribal wars, we cannot assume that the Native Tasmanians were like this, as reports suggest they were peaceful people.

It is also claimed that the Tasmanians didn't have stone axes. Yet in the first European to visit Tasmanian, Abel Tasman wrote. -

That they had heard certain human sounds, and only sounds nearly resembling the music of a trump or a small gong. That they had seen two trees about 2 or 3 fathom in thickness, measuring from 60 to 65 feet from the ground to the lowermost branches, which tree bore notches made with flint implements, the bark having been removed for the purpose; these notches, forming a kind of steps to enable persons to get up the trees, were fully 5 feet apart, so that our men concluded that the natives here must be of very tall stature.

So we can assume that a stone axe cut the notches cut into the tree. Also reports of Native Tasmanians using stone axes come from the first European to encounter the Tasmanian Aboriginals, the French sailor Marion Dufresne. In 1772 he and some of this crew came ashore in Tasmania where they met a party of the Natives. At first the relationships between them were cordial but then the Aboriginals panicked when they saw another boat approaching the shore and threw both stones and **hatchets** at the French sailors, who retreated after killing one or more of the Aborigines with muskets. So it means that the first European to see Native Tasmanians did witness them with stone axes. Just because archaeologists haven't discovered stone-axes in Tasmania it doesn't mean they are not there.

It is also claimed that Tasmanian Natives didn't make dugout canoes or even have rafts, but again these things being organic matter wouldn't show in the archaeological record. It is true that, as far as I know, we don't have any record of early English settlers witnessing any Natives using a canoe but most of these early settlers didn't have any interest in the aborigines anyway. So there is no real proof either way that the Tasmanian Aborigines did or didn't have dugout canoes or wooden rafts.

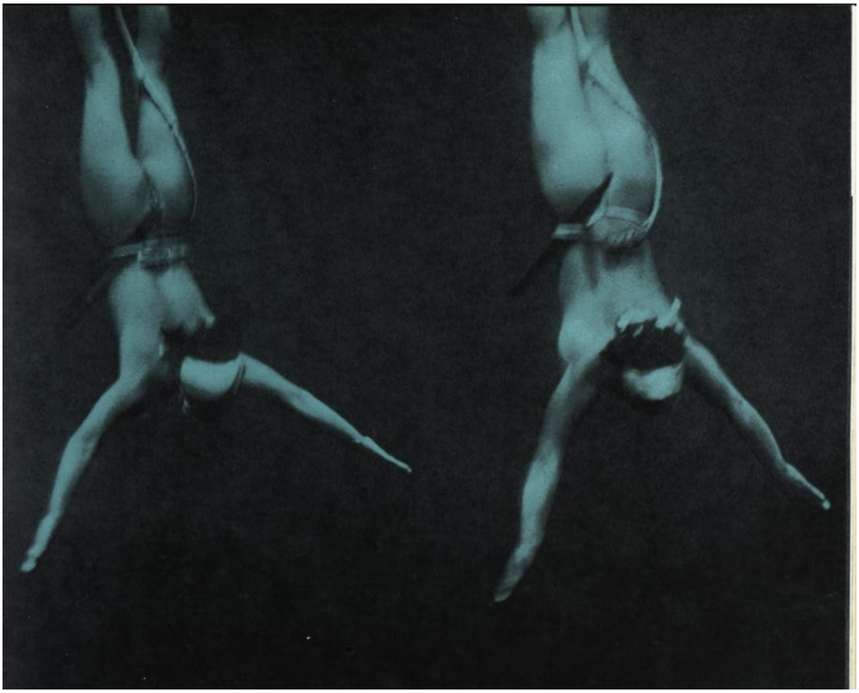
Because the Tasmanian Natives were completely nude in a cold climate it was assumed they were so backward they didn't every know how to make clothing. Yet if they were obtaining most of their food from the sea through diving, then it wouldn't make sense for them to wear clothes. The swimmers who swim the English Channel have to not only trained themselves to swim long distances, but train their bodies to endure cold water. One of the methods of doing this, is to get used to the cold all the time, by wearing the minimum clothing in cold weather and sleeping in a cold bedroom with the minimum covers over the bed. This constant exposure to the cold, changes the human body physically, as it increases its metabolic rate and changes its blood circulation to better protect its vital organ, by keeping them warm in cold conditions.

This means that wearing warm clothing will undermine a women's ability to swim and dive in cold waters. It is not a good idea to be kept warm, wearing warm clothing most of the time and then suddenly take them off to jump into icy water. It is true the men didn't have to swim in these cold waters, so in theory they could wear clothing. But making clothing has been traditionally women's work all over the world, so if the women didn't see the need to make clothing for themselves, they would be unlikely to make them for their men folk. Bone needles awls and reamers have been discovered in Tasmania but these date back to 3,500 - 7,000 years ago but no more recent finds have been made. Which proves they were more than capable of making clothing, they just didn't choose to do so.

The original Tasmanian aboriginals were also condemned for not finding ways to catch fish. Yet we cannot be sure of this, as they were never studied properly before they were wiped out, and archaeology is unlikely to find remains of nets, fishing lines or wooden fish traps as they are all organic. The point is that if it was far easier to dive for shellfish, crustaceans and seaweed than catch fish, then why bother with fish? Some of the tribes of present day sea gypsies do not bother hunting for fish either.

They were sensible not to over fish the waters around the island, and take more shellfish than was sustainable. (Unlike white people, who have irresponsibly over fished all over the world, collapsing fish stocks). So the women divers found all the food they needed from the shallows around the coast, and in the forest gathering fruits when they were in season. The Australian Aboriginals knew far more about birth control than the 19th century Europeans, they even knew about herbs that acted like modern birth control pills. So they knew how to keep their population in check and not over exploit their habitat through uncontrolled population growth.

Unfortunately we don't know the history of Aboriginal diving on the mainland as the white setters had very little interest in Aboriginal culture, but



Photograph by Fosco Maraini from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* of two ama divers diving to the bottom of the sea

we do have some knowledge in the North of Australia because it was the last place invaded by white settlers and because of pearl diving. To quote an official Australian Government web-site-

http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/pearling/index.htm

Australia's pearling industry began long before European settlement. Northern Australian coastal dwelling Aborigines harvested the abundant pearl shell from the shallow waters and had a well established trading network for pearl shell. Within Australia, pearl shells travelled further perhaps than any other item. In Western Australia an explorer saw an aboriginal wearing a pearly oyster-shell which had travelled at least 500 miles from its point of origin. (Blainey, G., 1975, Triumph of the nomads: a history of ancient Australia, p. 203-204.)

Aborigines also traded with the Macassan fishermen from the Indonesian island of Sulawesi who harvested beche-de-mer, trepang (sea-slugs), tortoise and pearl shell. Folklore, songs, cave paintings and the diaries of Matthew Flinders tell us of links between Australia and Indonesia dating back 500 years with traditional visits from Indonesian fishermen continuing until the 1970s.

When pearls were discovered along the Western Australia coast in the 1860s many of the pearling luggers began to use aborigine female divers.

As they discovered that female Aboriginals were better divers than men because they could stay underwater longer and work longer hours before they were completely exhausted. This practice became known as ‘blackbirding’.

To quote from an Australian web-site -

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/pacific/australia/western-australia/broome?v=print

From the 1860s till the 1880s naked Aboriginal men and women, called skindivers, were collecting the shells up to a depth of 12 metres. These divers hadn't applied for the job; they had been rounded up, chained and marched to the shore where they were crammed onto the pearl boats. They worked in atrocious conditions, were subjected to much brutality, and were dying in scores. Only when the shallower waters had been emptied of shells, and the pearlers acknowledged that it was impossible to go any deeper without equipment, the demand for Aboriginal divers decreased and eventually faded away.

To quote the official Australian government web-site again. –

From 1862-68, local Aborigines worked 'dry shelling' without wages, collecting oysters in the shallow waters of Shark Bay. Within three years, the supply was so low that larger boats were sent out two kilometres off shore to collect oysters in deep water. Six to eight Aboriginal men and women in a boat would 'naked dive' for shell. This meant they had to dive down deep with no oxygen, no snorkel and no mask.

In the Torres Strait, employment conditions were regarded as dangerous as well as 'unspeakably squalid and dirty' and contributed to a high degree of accident and death. (John Singe, The Torres Strait: People and History, 1979) Attempts to regulate the marine industry and to prevent improper employment of Aborigines and Islanders were made by the Queensland parliament and wages were required to be paid in front of an inspector after 1893.

The West Australian government reacted to this by instead of giving the Aboriginals legal protection against being exploited and used as slaves; they instead banned the use of Aboriginal women for diving. So in Western Australia a law was passed that prohibited the employment of women as divers, (*Perth Gazette* 23 December 1870). This also happened in the Torres Strait Islands where again women divers were banned, because they were also being exploited as used as slaves by blackbirders. This law demonstrates both sexual and racial prejudice; they clearly didn’t like the fact that black women could do a hard physical job better than white men. Though having black men do this job was seen as being slightly more acceptable.

Though this law may of saved the lives of many Aboriginal women because diving Suits were introduced. With the total disregard for the welfare of their divers by the pearling companies, a lack of understanding of the problems of the bends and shark attacks, the death rate of divers was 50%.

Japanese and Chinese divers were brought in and to quote from the official Australian Government web-site again. –

In the early 20th century, Australia's White Australia Policy restricted immigration to mostly white Europeans. This was a problem for Broome and the pearling industry who relied on cheap, 'expendable' labour from Asia. As a solution to this, the government recruited 12 divers from the British Navy as pearl divers. Unfortunately, nearly all of these divers died, so Broome was made an exception to the White Australia Policy.

Greek sponge divers were also brought in because they were white men but they fell out with the pealing companies, because of the way they were treated. The Greek divers even accused the pearling companies of murdering divers who complained too much.

Photograph by Fosco Maraini of three ama divers from Japanese web-site. –
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html
Two amas are showing the photographer the type of shells they forage for.

White pearl traders also used female divers in the Pacific. In Manihiki island there was a custom that only women could do diving Pearl diving can be dangerous, as pearls like to grow in undersea caves or hollows or best of all, on the roof of undersea caverns. So the diver has to go into these caves and caverns and cut them off the rocks with knifes. This is difficult and dangerous for a breath holding diver. Female diving still goes on today in the Pacific in places like Fiji, Somoa and Marian Islands, where women have traditionally gathered for shellfish and seaweed in shallow lagoons throughout the Pacific islands, while the men go off fishing in boats. Though to what extent women go out further and dive for these foods, is unknown, because, typically, all studies have concentrated on the men's fishing, and what women do is unrecorded. In some Pacific islands there is a cultural ban on women diving, as well as a superstition against women going on fishing boats for fear of bringing 'bad luck'. (Which is similar to a superstition European fisherman used to have about women.)

In Southern India women diving still goes on in the Chinnapalem a village in Tamil Nadu, where it seems the women gather from the ocean floor, a sea kelp called "shewal". It seems that even in the warmer waters of the Indian Ocean women divers still have the advantage over men, because even in this tropical ocean, men are still more likely to suffer hypothermia than women if immersed too long in the water. This is why professional male scuba divers will still wear wet suits in tropical regions. Next to Tamil Nadu is Kerala, a southeastern state in India, which also still has women divers. Like the diving communities of the Korea islands of Mara, Udo and Cheju the people live once lived in a matriarchy.

Kerala is a south-eastern state in India, which was once called; "the Malayala land of women." Up until the beginning of the 20th century it had matriarchal customs. As in most of the east there, they had extended families where uncles, aunts and cousins all lived under the same roof or close together. In a normal Indian family, when a woman got married she had to live with her husband's family. This meant in any dispute it was more likely that the family would take the side of the groom. So women mostly found themselves at a disadvantage when they got married.

In Kerala the opposite was true and it was the custom that men had to live with their wife's family. This put men at a disadvantage, and they could be thrown out of the wife's family if they showed dissension. Also in the royal family that ruled this state, inheritance was passed down the female line and resulted in many Queens becoming the rulers in the past before British rule.

Then at the beginning of the 20th century the British imposed the nuclear family onto Kerala. Matriarchy was deemed "backward," and "medieval." the nuclear family was hailed as the "modern way." This resulted in the matriarchal system being broken up. Yet despite this, Kerala women enjoy more equality with men than most of India. The Indian state of Meghalaya, on the Northwest coast of Indian next to Bangladesh, is also referred to as a matriarchy. This is because inheritance even today is still passed down the female line, keeping the wealth and positions of power in the hands of women.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/38523933@N00/369944811

Above is a controversial statue of a giant mermaid on Kollam beach, Kerala.

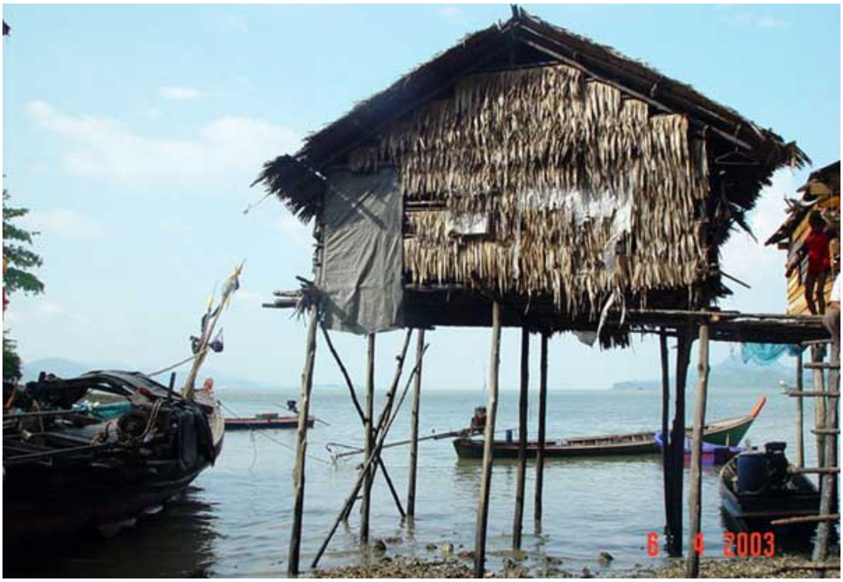
http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/19/stories/2005031908650300.htm

[Why this statue was erected has never been explained, although like the Little Mermaid statue at Copenhagen harbour it also has legs and not a fish tail and has become a major tourist attraction. The statue could be a statement about the women divers that once existed along the Indian coast and that these women divers were also mermaids of legend.]

The same is true in Taiwan. The aboriginal people, (aborigine, means, ‘first people’), traditionally fed themselves by gathering and diving for shellfish and seaweed but repeated invasions from China has dispossessed these people, so now they only make up 2% of the population.

Yet these aboriginal tribes also have a tradition of matriarchy that still exists today in the Ami tribe, where property is still passed down the female line.

Another people like this are the sea gypsies, known as the Salone, Orang Laut, Moken and Bajau. They live on the coast and in many islands of many south East Asia countries. They range from the Myeik Archipelago in Burma, to Thailand, Malaya, Borneo, Sumatra and the Sulu Archipelago of the Philippines. Some still live in matriarchal communities, and this is not that uncommon in this part of the world. The biggest is the Minangkabau people in Western Sumatra which numbers about 4 million people and is the largest and most stable Matriarchal community in the world today. There are also Minangkabau people in Malaya, and the Malaysian government finds their matriarchal customs an 'embarrassment' and tries to censor all knowledge of this.



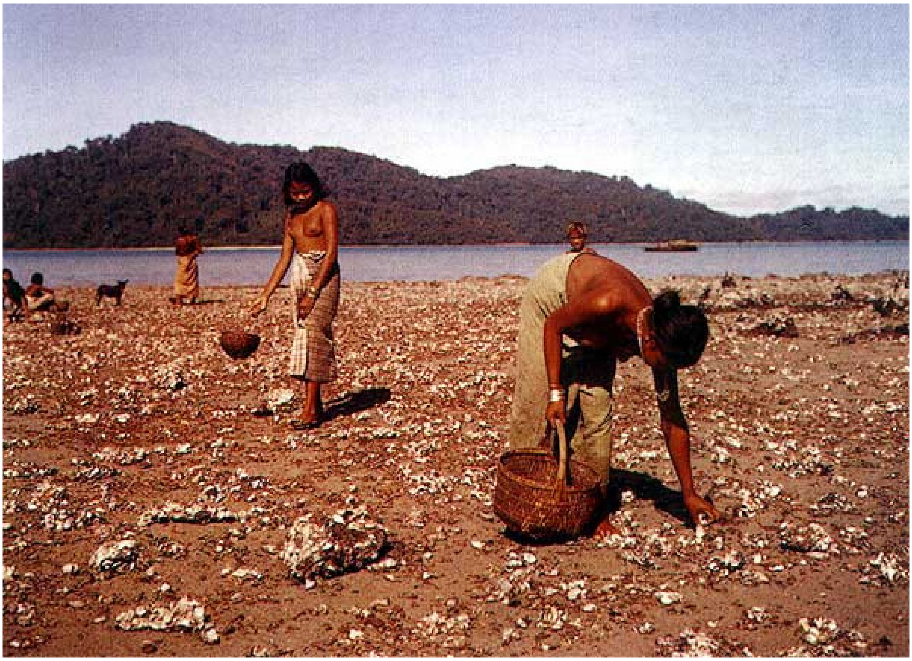
Pictures of the, sea gypsies: The Salon People of Myanmar, (Burma) showing the boats they use and the houses they build on stilts out of the shallows.

Picture From Shan Yoma Travel & Tours Co.Ltd. web-site.

http://www.exploremyanmar.com/

Archeologists have found the remains of similar houses Scottish lochs in Pre-Roman times. Where likewise ancient people had houses on stilts built on these lochs. Archeologists have been puzzled why ancient people would want to do this, instead of building houses on land. But if they were sea people; then living on the water where the women would dive for shellfish and other forms of seafood, it would make sense to live on the water. Also, as the archeologists have speculated, living on the water would be good protection against, looters and robbers. This also makes sense of the stories of mermaids who lived in houses in the sea. The houses wouldn't be under the sea as later mythmakers imaged, but built on stilts in sheltered estuaries, harbours, or salt and freshwater marshes and on lakes and lochs.

This then raises the question; what happened to these people and their way of life? As we can see with the South East Asian people their way of life was sustainable and there was no reason why the sea-people in Europe couldn't of continue their way of life up until modern times. The fact that they didn't, suggests that there was strong interference from people who lived on land who persecuted them for no other reason that their way of life was so different, and the females were the main breadwinners. We can get and idea of what happened through the Highland clearances of Scotland in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 'landowners' of the Highlands decided that the Highland lands were unprofitable and it would be better to graze sheep there. So the families who had been living there for probably thousands of years, were simply moved off the land, and if they resisted then, force and violence was used. Tens of thousands of people were forcibly moved to poor land on the coast where they were expected to make a living by fishing and seaweed harvesting. Most were unable to do this and many immigrated to England, USA, Canada and Australia. The irony was that sheep herding didn't make as much of a profit as the 'landowner' thought and was soon discontinued in many places, leaving the Highlands uninhabited.



Picture shows the sea gypsy women foraging for food at low tide.
Pictures from Shan Yoma Travel & Tours Co.Ltd. web-site.
http://www.exploremyanmar.com/

Collecting food at low tide or in the shallows is an easy way for people to obtain food, though the sea gypsies also dive underwater to forage for food as well. Some commentators have suggested that the sea-gypsies have only been doing this only for the last few hundred years, theorizing they were displaced people, driven off their land and forced to live on the beach and in the sea, and had to learn ways live and feed themselves to survive. But as I will show in this book this is a very ancient way in which people fed themselves and the sea-gypsies way of life may of gone back millions of years in human evolution.

The sea gypsies live off, what they can gather in the sea, so like the ama and haenyo divers, they live on shellfish and editable seaweed. They also gather sea slugs and sea cucumber that they mostly sell to buy rice, fruits and berries. They also did once dive for pearls before the cultivated pearls took over the industry. The Moken refuse to hunt for fish but the Orang Laut and Bakau will do so. It is claimed that the children of the sea gypsies learn to swim before they can walk, and mothers give birth underwater. This is something western women have only recently discovered, as a better way of giving birth.

It also seems that sea-gypsy children have become adapted to be able to see clearly underwater. Intrigued by stories about sea-gypsy children collecting sea food from the sea floor, vision researcher Anna Gislén of Lund University in Sweden decided to investigate how such kids can pick out small objects while diving without goggles. Unfortunately most sea-gypsies are very suspicious of strangers, and it took her some time before she found a tribe willing to be studied. Finally the Moken allowed her to study their children.

Her studies showed that compared with the children of Europeans the Moken children did have superior underwater vision though it seems they paid for this by having impaired nearsighted vision out of the water. Further research revealed that European children could be trained to see better underwater, but not as well as Moken children.

This raised the question whether the Moken children’s better underwater sight was genetically inherited or was learnt behaviour through diving underwater and collecting seafood from a very early age

The Moken received much media attention in 2005 after the Southeast Asia tsunami, where hundreds of thousands of lives were lost in the disaster. The Moken's knowledge of the sea managed to spare all but one of their lives. This was because they saw the signs before anyone else. Those close to the beach made for the higher ground before the main Tsunami struck, while those out at sea took their boat further out into deeper water. However their settlements and about one-fifth of their boats were destroyed. Even local fishermen failed to see the warning signs, because although they had an intimate knowledge of the sea, it seems, not to the same degree as the Moken. The sea gypsies live a separate existence to the people of the mainland, living in boats, which they construct without nails but are strong enough to withstand the monsoon winds. As mentioned before, when not living in boats they live in stilt-built houses erected between high and low tide. Unfortunately they are treated with suspicion by the mainland peoples, who regard them as pagans. Piracy is still commonplace in this part of the world and the sea-gypsies get the blame, even though they have a reputation of being gentle and peaceful people. In the Myeik Archipelagos of Burma, fishermen are destroying the coral reefs by using dynamite to kill fish. Again the sea gypsies get the blame, even though it would be against their own best interests to destroy the reefs where they traditionally gather food. This might be to do with changes in the sea gypsy communities, like the Gypsies in Europe they once lived in matriarchal communities. Up until the 19th century Gypsy queens ruled families, but in the last two hundred years Gypsy kings have replaced them. The same thing is apparently happening to the sea gypsies, where under pressure to 'fit in' with the normal patriarchal society men are now ruling sea gypsy communities. The men are not so responsible in their behavior and have used both dynamite and poison to catch fish.

The problems of the sea gypsies are not unique. Other wandering people are the Berber and Tuaregs of North Africa who also have a matriarchal tradition, like the sea and European Gypsies, roam all over North Africa.. This creates problems for the governments of countries they move through, as they don't belong to any one country.

It is of interest that the fishing villages in Japan who still use ama divers are also called sea-gypsies and it seems in the past they did travel around the coast in the same way the Moken do today. But this practice was discouraged and banned by successive Japanese governments, forcing the ama people to settle down in villages.

There was a race of people like the sea-gypsies on the west coast of South America. When the Spanish invaded the area in the 16th century, they found people living and trading on large sailing balsa rafts. The Spanish were amazed to find that the rigging and sails of these rafts were nearly the same as their own sails and rigging. The Spanish were so impressed with these rafts that they commandeered some of them and their crew, for their own purposes. The crews didn't like this and fought back, so when they were far out at sea they would cut the lashing that held the balsa logs together, resulting in the raft falling apart. The Spanish not being able to swim, and some wearing armor, quickly drowned, but the native crew were completely at home in the water and were able to swim and repair their rafts at sea. It seems that these sea-people used to do the same trick on the Incas when they tried to commandeer their rafts.

Because of the influence of the Spanish, this way of life slowly died out and the last balsa rafts were reported in the 19th century. These people told the Spanish of journeys they made to Galapagos and the Polynesian islands. 20th century scholars decided these stories were fiction because they thought the balsa rafts were too primitive to make long ocean going voyages. But one scientist Thor Heyerdahl believed that these rafts were sea-worthy and to prove his point he sailed one from Peru to Tahiti. Having proven it could be done, other tried to do the same and one crew managed to sail a balsa raft all the way from South America to Australia.

There were once Greek female and male sponge divers up who dived in the sea naked. Then in 1865 the diving suit was introduced allowing a diver to stay underwater as long as he liked and breath holding diving quickly declined. Unfortunately the early divers had no knowledge of decompression sickness, causing the deaths of 10,000 divers up until 1910. Now the waters around the Korean and Japan are fairly cold but women divers have been reported in operating in the Arctic Ocean! And near the Antarctic! Female divers in the Ussuri Territory of the Bering Sea coast. once dived in these cold waters to harvest scallops. They mostly worked in the summer months but continued even in the colder autumn months, before the sea iced over. The Ussuri Territory is on the east coast of Russia whom fought over the ownership of this territory with China at the beginning of the 20th century. The Bering Sea is a shallow sea in the Arctic circle, that was above sea level during the last Ice Age. It is very rich in marine life and is extensively fished.

Then in the 1920s the Russian authorities began to use modern diving gear and motorboats equipped with dredges. Needless to say when they adopted modern equipment, the scallpops became over fished and fishing of them in the area was banned in 1960. It was for this reason that the more sensible Koreans and Japanese banned the use of modern scuba gear for shell diving to make sure the local waters were not over fished in the same way.

Female haenyo divers from Cheju, (also spelt Jeju) worked in Vladivostok a Russian port on the Sea of Japan. This port freezes up in the winter and has to be kept open by icebreakers. Even in summer it still snows and these divers had to work in these conditions, as they continued to work from May to August. It seems that female divers from Cheju since the 19th century have worked in China, Japan and the Korean mainland. It seems that they have been employed in Japan since the 5th century, though the Cheju divers did complain that the local seaweed dealers exploit them. It seems there are family ties between the haenyo divers of Korea and the Ama divers of Japan. It might come from the time when they were all sea gypsies and there loyalties were with other sea gypsy communities rather than the rulers of the countries they happen to be in.

The Japanese authorities ruthlessly exploited the Cheju divers when Cheju was conquered by Japan in the 1930s. The divers got together and led a mass protest against this exploitation, and at first the authorities agreed to their demands but then more policemen were shipped from Japan and the haenyo leaders were arrested and tortured, and the exploitation continued to the end of the Japanese occupation.

We would assume that the people of Cheju had ended their nightmare when the Japanese left, but worse was to follow. During the

Japanese occupation the Communists became a powerful political force on the island. Also the women of this island organised themselves to form, The Cheju Women's Association in 1947 to fight for women's rights in Korea's male dominated society. The Cheju police had collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation and were unpopular with the Cheju population. This was made worse on March 1, 1947, when police fired into a crowd of demonstrators killing six people, and wounding many others, which resulted in a general strike. Demonstrators then began to attack police stations, so the governor of the island called the mainland for help.

The mainland government sent over 3,000 troops to restore order, but this only made the situation worse as the Communists led the resistance and fought back. Then several hundred of the soldiers mutinied and handed over their arms to the Communist. The commander of the troops Lt. General Kim Ik Ruhl attempted to negotiate with the Communist leader Kim Sam-dal, but they failed to reach any agreement. It was then that the South Korean government then lost patients with their commander and replaced him with a hard line commander Tak Sung Rok. He brought with him anti-communists para-militaries and thousands of more troops and set about an extremely brutal crackdown. Villages were burn to the ground, and people tortured with electric wires, publicly humiliated and executed, many by being buried alive. Because the Cheju Women's Association sympathised with the Communists, the women were treated as harshly as the men. Much of the islander's property was confiscated and ended up in the hands of the oppressors. Cheju women were not only gang raped but many were also forced to marry the men who had murdered and tortured their relations.

American sources claimed that 15-20,000 islanders died in this massacre but other sources put the figure much higher and claimed that 60,000 to 100,000 people were murdered. The real number will probably never be known though it is estimated that one fifth of the population died in the massacre, while many others managed to escape to Japan, and built their own villages on the Japanese coast. Yet in spite of this brutal crackdown of the Cheju people, the haenyo women still managed to survive and continue their way of life.

As mentioned before, women divers have been not only been reported operating near the Artic but the Antarctic as well, on the most southern point of the South American continent near Cape Horn. As we can see in this following report from the late Jacques Cousteau, about ama divers.-

For 1500 years in ancient Japan, as well as neighbouring Korea, these women have traditionally dived for pearls. At least 30,000 of their kind remain. Today they mostly dive for food. Wearing only a loincloth, they have begun to wear masks and snorkels within the 20th century. They dive both during the warm summers and the cooler winter months when temperatures can reach 50° F. They plunge to depths of 20 to 80 feet – sometimes 100 – to *gather food, in the form of shellfish and seaweed, which they place in a net around their waists. They learn to dive around puberty and do not stop till they are about 60 years old. They are known to dive right up to the point of childbirth and having given birth, resume shortly after, nursing their infants between dives!*

A similar group of women once dived in the wave tossed waters off Tierra del Fuego. They descended completely naked, through waters averaging 42° F to collect clams and crabs for food.

The Tierra Del Fuego are islands at the most southerly part of South America. The orginal inhabitants were the Ona and Yamana tribes, though anthropologists found them to be similar to the Chono and Alakaluf peoples of Chile.

19th century photograph of an Yamana woman. Photos courtesy of the Martin Gusinde Museum, Puerto Williams, made available on the web site - http://www.victory-cruises.com/tourtdf.html

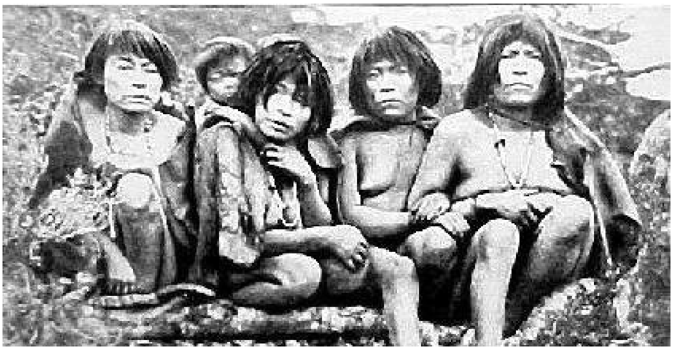
The Ona tribes live inland while the Yamana or Yagan are like sea gypsies, they were nomadic people, moving along the coast and on offshore islands gathering and diving for shellfish and fishing from canoes.

E. Lucas Bridges in his book; *Uttermost Part of the Earth, Indians of Tierra del Fuego*, reported that; there was a division in the sexes in the Yamana tribes.

> *There was a fair division of labour between the sexes. The men gathered fuel and fungus for food, while the women cooked, fetched water, paddled the canoes and fished. The men tended the fires, made and mended the canoes and prepared material for them. They also attended to the hunting - otter, seal, guanaco, foxes and birds – and speared the large fish. Being in charge of the canoes - for it was only on long journeys, or when in a hurry, that the men helped with the paddles - the women were also good swimmers, but it was a rare thing to find a male Yamana who could swim. The women were by no means slaves, for what they caught was their own. The husband used only what the wife gave him, and she did not ask his permission before making gifts to her friends. Members of this tribe often lived in places where for many miles there were no beaches on which it was possible to haul up their canoes. They were compelled, therefore, to anchor them off the rocks in the best shelter to be found. This anchoring was done by the women. After the canoe was unloaded and the husband had gone up into the forest to collect fuel for the fire, the wife would paddle off in the canoe a few fathoms into the thick kelp (a large species of seaweed), which makes a splendid breakwater. She would grasp a handful of the kelp's rope-like branches and secure them to the canoe, which was thus safely anchored by their roots, then slip into the water, swim ashore and hasten to the fire to dry and warm herself. The Yamana women swam like a dog and had no difficulty getting through the kelp. They learnt to swim in infancy, and were taken out by their mothers in order to get them used to it. In winter, when the kelp was coated with a film of frost, a baby girl out with her mother would sometimes make pick-a-back swimming difficult by climbing onto her parent's head to escape the cold water and frozen kelp.*

So it shows women divers were able to dive in the very cold waters of the Barents Sea and the Tierra del Fuego. These conditions would kill a normal man within twenty minutes. The women were the main breadwinners of the Yamana as the majority of their food came from the shellfish, crabs and seaweed they collected by diving. The Yamana women even fished and made fishing lines from their own hair. They didn't need fishhooks, because they had the skilfulness to catch fish without them. They would tie bait and a stone to their lines and when a fish bit on the bait, they would bring it to the surface so carefully it didn't startle the fish. Then with the fish so near the surface they would scoop it up with their hand. The men also caught fish by spearing them.

The nudity of the Yamaha in the very cold conditions of the utmost southerly part of South America was seen, like with the Tasmanian Aborigines, as a sign of their ignorance and backwardness. As it was assume they were so primitive that they were unable to make any clothing. Yet studies of these people have demonstrated that the women were very skilful in making baskets, if you can weave baskets you can also weave clothing. Also the women of their neighbours the Ona did make very warm clothing for their tribe. So it wasn't a matter that they couldn't make clothing, it was that they didn't choose to do so, for the same reasons why the Tasmanian Aborigines didn't want clothing. To maintain their way of life the women had to condition their bodies to withstand the freezing waters near the Antarctic continent.



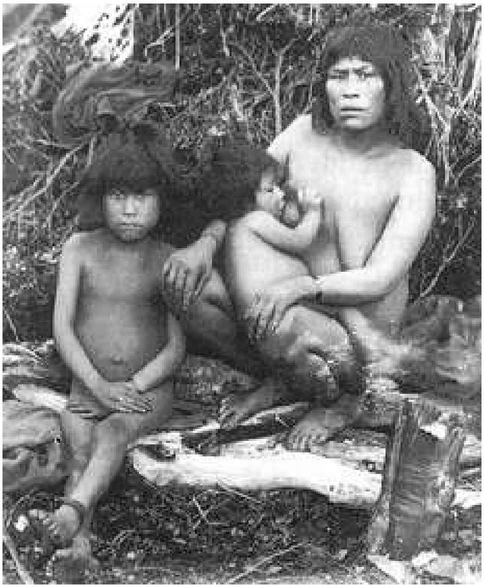
19th century photograph of a group of Yamana women. Photo courtesy of the Martin Gusinde Museum, Puerto Williams, made available on the web site - http://www.limbos.org/sur/yaman.htm. Unfortunately none of the Yamana look very happy in these photographs, but that might be to do with the relationship between the missionaries, who took these photos, and the Yamana. It seems that the Yamana didn't like the missionaries who were trying to 'civilize' them.

The unhappy expression on the faces of these photographs must have suited the missionaries, as it helps justify their efforts to interfere in their lives. Whereas photographs of happy smiling natives would of caused some people to question the morality of forcing change onto them. Many missionaries did genuinely believe that they were 'helping' the people they were trying to convert, but to do so they had to disparage their way of life and claim that they would live better lives as 'good Christians". The problem is that the derogatory comments on the lives of the Yamana or the Native Tasmanians, also helps justifies the actions of the those who want to commit genocide and wipe them out completely.

As Dawin was to write in his book *The Voyage of the Beagle* about the Yamana. –

We were well clothed, and though sitting close to the fire were far from too warm; yet these naked savages, though further off, were observed, to our great surprise, to be streaming with perspiration at undergoing such a roasting.

19th century photograph of a group of two young Yamana women. Photograph from the book, *The Land of Magellan,* by William S.Barclay.



19th century photograph of a Yamana mother and her children, who clearly didn't like the photographer, or were suspicious or frightened of him. Photograph from web site. http://www.limbos.org/sur/yaman.htm

Like the Tasmanian Natives the only clothing the Yamana wore was the fur of animals over their shoulders. They walked barefoot in the snow and warmed their feet in the near freezing ocean. (This was because the snow-covered ground would be below freezing point, while the ocean would be slightly warmer because it would freeze if it was below the freezing point of salt water.)

Apprehensive looking Yamana women called Kamanakar Kipa, on board the French ship *The Comanche,* 1882. From web site. http://www.limbos.org/sur/yaman.htm

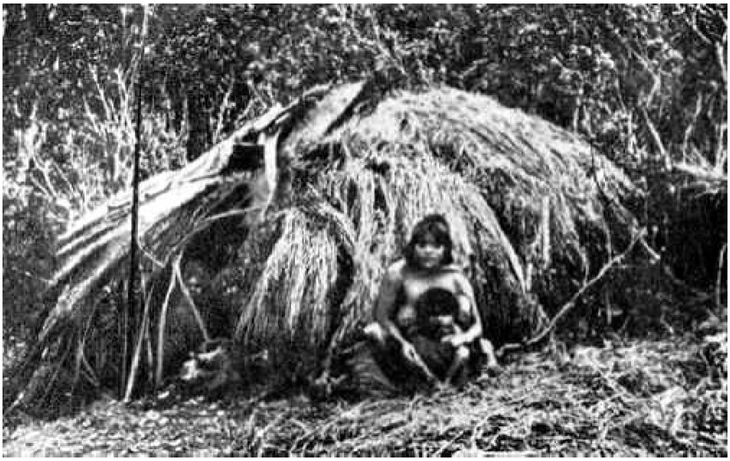
It was also noted that the Yamana people were clumsy walkers as if they were not used to doing this. The reason could be that both sexes spend a lot of time in canoes and the women swimming and diving so they didn't develop their legs muscles in the same way most ordinary people do. (This has been noted with other sea-people who spend too much time in the water).

The native people of the Tierra Del Fuego managed to survive up to the 19th and 20th centuries but unfortunately the Christian missionaries arrived in the 19th century determined to covert, clothe and 'civilize' them. The Yamana resisted this gross interference in their way of life and even killed some of the first Missionaries; unfortunately this didn't put off these fanatical Christians who were too insensitive to take the clear message that they were not wanted. Then gold was discovered in 1880 and English settlers found that sheep could be grazed on the Tierra Del Fuego.

Yagan family in two canoes. Photograph taken by French Scientific Expedition, 1882. From web site - http://www.limbos.org/sur/yaman.htm

In the meanwhile the white people has wiped out most of the animals the Ona men has hunted so when sheep were put on their land they naturally hunted and killed the sheep The Tierra Del Fuego had after all been their land for thousands of years. So they assumed they were at liberty to hunt and kill the new animal that the white man placed on their land. The new "landowners" didn't see it like this and to protect their herds, paid people to exterminate the Ona. They at first paid a head of a sheep for a pair of Ona ears. Then it began to be noticed that many Ona were walking around without any ears, whom were still very much alive. So it was changed to a head for a head, the head of a Ona for a head of a sheep. Unfortunately the bounty hunters and landowners didn't discriminate between Onas and Yamana people even though the Yamana men were not hunters like the Ona. So they were wiped out along with the Ona. (This used to be common practice throughout South and North America where "Landowners" paid bounty hunters to exterminate the Native people on "their" land. These murderers would cut off various body parts and bring it to the "landowners" to prove they have murdered an Indian).

Later the missionaries rounded up the few remaining survivors and attempted to 'civilize' them, but the Yamana people didn't like the life of living in Christian missions. The last of them finally died out through disease and despair. The last pure blood Yamana male died in 1977 and only one pure blood Yamana woman has survived to the 21st century. So a unique race of people was wiped out, for no other reason that sheep farmers wanted to graze sheep on their land.

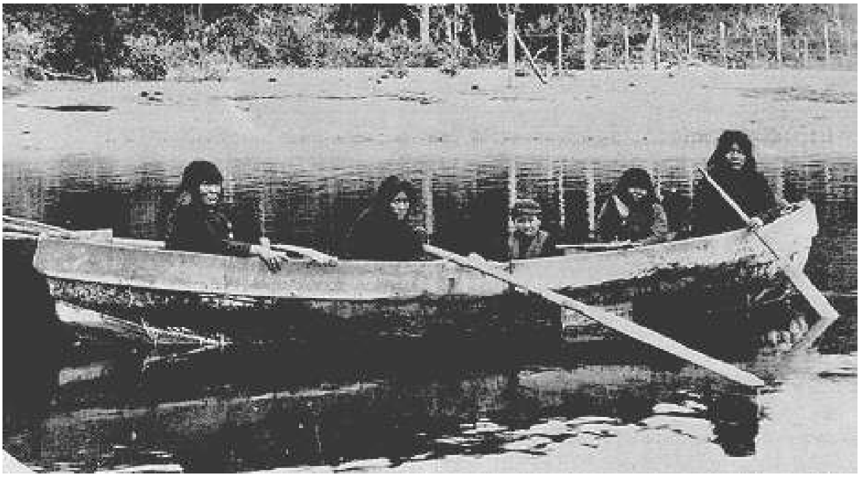


Early 20th century photograph of a Yamana mother and her child outside one of the shelters the Yamana used. As they were always on the move they didn't have permanent houses but temporary shelter they could make within an hour. Photograph taken by French Scientific Expedition, 1882. From web site - http://www.limbos.org/sur/yaman.htm

North of the Tierra Del Fuego was another tribe like the Yamana called the Alakaluf. Where again the only the women swam, dived and paddled canoes. The women would dive underwater with a basket in their mouths to collect shellfish, crabs and seaweed. The men stayed in the canoe and tried to spear fish when he saw any. There were other tribes of a similar type even further north on the mainland, like the Chonos and Kawésqar but they were wiped out as early as the 18th century.

The missionary were told by the men of these tribes that they were once ruled by women, but then through violence they managed to take control. Yet none of these tribes had recognized male leaders or a strict hierarchal system like most patriarchal tribes. So it could be that the men were telling the missionaries what they wanted to hear. Some of the missionaries accused the men of these tribes of being treacherous liars, probably for this reason. The missionaries also claimed that the people of these tribes were unhappy and miserable people. Though perhaps their unhappiness and misery might be something to do with them being slaughtered by white people and their way of life destroyed. The decline of the Alacalufs (Kawésqar) people can be seen in the following census figures show. –

1850: 4,000 Kawesqar persons, 1925: 150 Kawesqar persons, 1955: 60 Kawesqar persons, 1985: 50 Kawesqar people, 1996 20 Kawesqar people



Alacalufs (Kawésqar) women in canoe, photograph taken in 1907 in a place called Cutter Cove.
From web site. -http://www.limbos.org/sur/alak.htm

Another picture of Alacalufs (Kawésqar) women on previous page.
From web-site. –
http://www.andaman.org/BOOK/chapter54/text-Fuego/Kawesqar/text-Kawesqar.htm

There have been reports of other sea-people in other parts of the world who died out when the first white settlers arrived.

When the first Portuguese explorers in 1488 reached South Africa, they discovered there two types of people. There were herders, the Khoikhoi, who kept cattle and sheep and there were the Gorinchaicona, which the Europeans called Watermen or Strandlopers. The Gorinchaicona lived on the coast, on a diet of mussels, abalone, crayfish seals, roots, fruits and edible seaweed. The first Europeans had very little interest in the Watermen and traded with the Khoikhoi as the Portuguese and Dutch could obtain from them fresh meat to continue their voyages to India and Indonesia. Strandlopers is a Dutch word meaning beachcombers but in Holland this word is term of abuse, which gives an insight to how people regarded beachcombers back in the 16th century.

Beachcombers or Strandlopers were more than likely sea people or mermaids still living their ancient ways on the beach. In fact the expression, “on the beach” is of people who are down and out and have to make a living beachcombing. In the 19th century beachcombing become very popular with many Europeans throughout the Pacific Islands. These ex-sailors discovered they could live an easy life gathering food on the beach and shallows and finding items from ships washed up on shore for which they could trade. Other Europeans regarded them as little more than tramps or vagabonds and claimed they had, “gone native”. For this reason some of these beachcombers became intermediaries between the white conquerors and the native population.

When the Dutch came in with force to conquered South Africa, the Gorinchaicona disappeared from history. In recent years, scientists have taken a lot of interest in them because of archaeological finds in the same area. On the South African coast are many of the oldest sites of modern human remains, like in the Klaasies River Mouth on the Tsitsikamma Coast and the Border Cave on the Indian Ocean Coast. Here they have found vast amounts of shell middens going back between 40,000 to 120,000 years.

It has occurred to some scientists that the way of life of the Gorinchaicona people was probably the same as the people living in the same area 120,000 years ago. They could even be the same people, but as they were wiped out very quickly when the first white settlers arrived, we will never know.

In another part of Africa is the Bolama-Bijagos Archipelago which is a group of 88 islands in West African and is now part of the nation of Guinea-Bissau. Traces of human settlement of these islands goes back 11,000 years, though probably humans lived there for millions of years.

[Photograph of the Bijago people wading from one island to another, taken from the web-site.

http://www.celebrityphotoz.com/Paris_Hilton/biography.html?title=Guinea-Bissau#Matriarchy

To quote the web-site
http://www.sacredland.org/world_sites_pages/Bijagos.html

The Bijagos are a matriarchal and matrilineal society in which women choose their husbands and which is guided by female priests. Traditionally a hunter-gatherer society, they were famous for their almadias, large ocean-going canoes that could hold up to 70 people.

The Bolama-Bijagos islands are in a cluster, with Bolama the largest and closest to the mainland. Only 23 of the 88 islands are inhabited. The semi-tropical islands consist of mangrove forests, saltwater swamps and palm trees interspersed with zones of dry forest, coastal savannah and sand banks. Island rivers release nutrient-rich freshwater into the ocean, creating a breeding ground and habitat for many species including crocodile, hippopotamus, fish, sea turtles, crustaceans, and mollusks.

This suggests the people there were gathering marine food, a job probably done by the women and his is why they would be main breadwinner and rulers of the community.

Unfortunately the history of this Archipelago has been bloody over the last thousand years. Because of tribal wars on the mainland, people driven out of their homelands have tried to find refuse on the islands and some of the islands close to the mainland were occupied by them. The Portuguese arrived in 1446 and traded for slaves with tribal rulers on the mainland.

Unfortunately, the Portuguese did also try to conquer the islands, but the Bijago were able to hide from them in the mangrove forests and saltwater swamps. The Portuguese also couldn't settle on the islands because they couldn't find freshwater on any of them, a problem that the Bijago didn't have. Then in1792 the British arrived and also tried to conquer the archipelago but had the same problems. In 1849, a joint British, French and Portuguese force made another attempt to conquer the Bijago people but again this failed.

The three nations had a dispute about the "ownership" of the Bolama-Bijagos and this was settled in a conference in 1870 where it was established that Portugal 'owned' this islands. In the 20th century with the use of modern technology like motorboats the Portuguese were better able to invade the islands and forced their rule upon them. They established palm plantations on some of the islands and forced some of the Bijago people to work on them. But the lack of fresh water on these islands made this difficult to continue and 1941 the industry collapsed.

In 1956 Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde islands formed the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). The Portuguese reacted to this political movement with violence and massacred striking dockworkers in the city of Bissau in 1959. This resulted in a civil war from 1963-1974 when the Portuguese finally withdrew.

Unfortunately the islands are still under threat, mostly from industrial fishing by large fishing fleets from China, Japan, and South Korea, also illegal fishing by other African countries. The islands are also used by violent drug smuggling gangs who have taken over some of the islands and use them to ship drugs to America. It is also proposed to use these islands for a ship breaking industry. To quote the Sacred Land web-site again.

Upon learning of the environmental damage being wrought in India, Pakistan, and other Asian countries, the main locales for shipbreaking, the Bijagos were determined to stop the industry from developing in their waters. The hazardous materials released into the waters could destroy the pristine marine environment that serve as a breeding ground for so many marine species and harm the indigenous fishing industry. Guinea-Bissau is a target for shipbreaking because it is not a signatory to the Basel Convention, an international treaty that regulates the transport and disposal of hazardous substances across national lines. "The people of Guinea-Bissau and their Government are victims of manipulative companies," says Leo Stolk from NOVIB, Oxfam Netherlands. "A shipbreaking yard will mean destruction, not sustainable development for an area protected for its nature. It can only cause harm to communities reliant on the health of the oceans for their livelihood." Public outcry and the opposition of political and business leaders in Guinea-Bissau eventually led the government to reject DDY's proposal.

In spite of all this the matriarchal way of life of the Bijago people is still present although it is under threat from Christian missionaries.

The genocide of the Native Tasmanians and Yamana of Tierra Del Fuego, the 'disappearance' of the Gorinchaicona, the massacre of the people of Cheju and the persecution of the Bijago sea gypsies of South East Asia does give a clear picture of probably what happened to the mermaid people in Europe.

It is well known that the victors in any conflict generally write history, and if the victors practice genocide, then they do their best to cover up this fact. For instance, as a boy I went to school in Australia, and we were taught that Tasmanian Aboriginals died out soon after European settlers arrived there, but we were not taught why and how this happened. We were certainly not told that white settlers were systematically slaughtering the Native people. We were also not taught about the genocide of the Aboriginals on the mainland either. Even today many Australians will still deny this happened and it is understandable why they should do so. No one would like to acknowledge that their ancestors were psychopathic murders or that the land they live on, was forcefully and violently taken from the Native people who once lived there. The people of North and South America also have this problem, as this is also what happened to their Native population

What is remarkable about the genocide of the Australian Aboriginals was that in the English law of the 19th century it was technically illegal to do this. Yet very few white men were ever charged with killing Aboriginals, it seems that the people in charge were willing to turn a blind eye to this behaviour. I was told of a case in Alice Springs in the 1920s where two men were charged with killing Aboriginals and their defense was; "we didn't realise it was against the law to kill Abbos".

In her book *Seven Days: Tales of Magic, Sex and Gender*. Jani Farrell Roberts writes. -

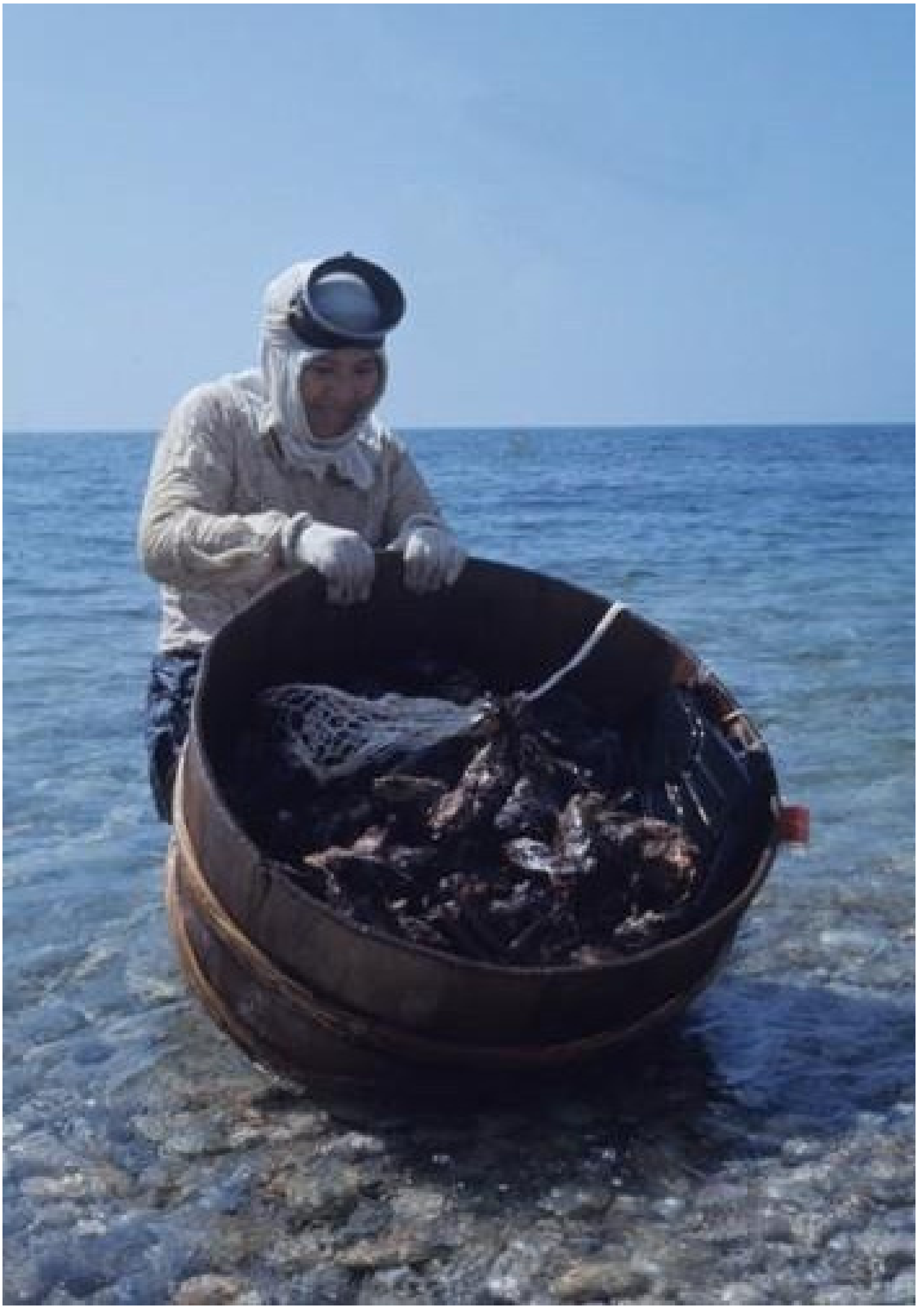
When Whites arrived, Aborigines proved very capable of waging war in self-defence. The early records of white settlement in Australia are full of records of Aboriginal armed resistance to the settlers stealing their land. In 1795 the newly arrived British military were sent out with instructions "in the hope of inspiring terror, to erect gibbets in different places whereupon the bodies of all they might kill were to be hung." In 1816 it was made illegal for Aborigines to approach Sydney in groups larger than six. Any larger group, even if unarmed, could be shot. In western New South Wales Aborigines co-ordinated attacks by different tribes over hundreds of square miles. In 1824 martial law was declared around Bathhurst. After a massacre by police Rev. Thelkeid reported: "forty-five heads were collected and boiled down for the *sake of the skulls. My informant, a magistrate, saw the heads packed ready for exportation ... to accompany the commanding officer on his voyage to England." P16 MM In 1829 martial law was also declared in Tasmania. In 1838 300 the warriors of the Pangerang drove out the settlers near Wangarrata. In Western Victoria a confederacy of the Gunditj-Mara, the Tjapwurong and Bungaditj, with warriors also from the neighbouring Kirrrae tribe, carried on a sustained campaign during the 1830s and 1840s. In 1840 it was made illegal to sell guns to Aborigines. Around 1845 swivel guns were installed on sheep stations. It took over 60 years for the armed resistance of the southern tribes to be broken. In the north and centre massacres and armed resistance continued until the end of the 1930s.*

This may be what it was like for the mermaid people of Europe. With the Christian Church very much against them, they could be murdered with impunity. So if a “landowner” decided to drain a swamp and received opposition from the people living on it, then he could pay people to; “clear them out”. Which may involve murder and genocide. The fens in Norfolk were not drained until the 19th century, but there is no record of people living there when this happened, if people were still there, they were more likely driven out or quietly exterminated.

For obvious reasons the authorities of any country do not like to admit to genocide and try to hush it up. Today there are Nazi sympathizers who deny that the genocide of the Jews, Gypsies and Homosexuals happened in Nazi Germany. They were very successful hushing it up in Australia up until recent times. The same is true for both North and South America where whole tribes of America Indians were wiped out, and killers were paid a bounty for Indian scalps, or other body parts, but this is hardly mentioned in history books. Scalping was a practiced by white men against the Indian population, to prove they had killed an Indian and collect a bounty. Not the other way around, as depicted in western films. Though it has to be admitted that some Indians did take up this practice in tribal wars, selling the scalps to white men, of those who had died.

The same could of happened to the sea-people living along the coast. In theory they should have been all right as they were not interfering with anyone and not in the way of someone who wants to make money. Also up until the invention of diving suits, motorboats and seabed trawls, breath-holding diving was the only way to harvest shellfish and editable seaweed from the sea floor. So they were still providing a valuable service to the wider community when they traded shellfish for other commodities. Yet the Christian Church seemed to still have had a problem with this, and objected to mermaids diving in the nude and being the main breadwinner of their families. So for this reason their way of life was destroyed. This is why mermaid or ama survived in Japan to the present day the Shinto religion didn’t have a problem with women divers unlike Christianity or Confucianism in China and the Korean mainland.

Photograph by Fosco Maraini from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island*
Of an exhausted Ama diver coming out of the water.



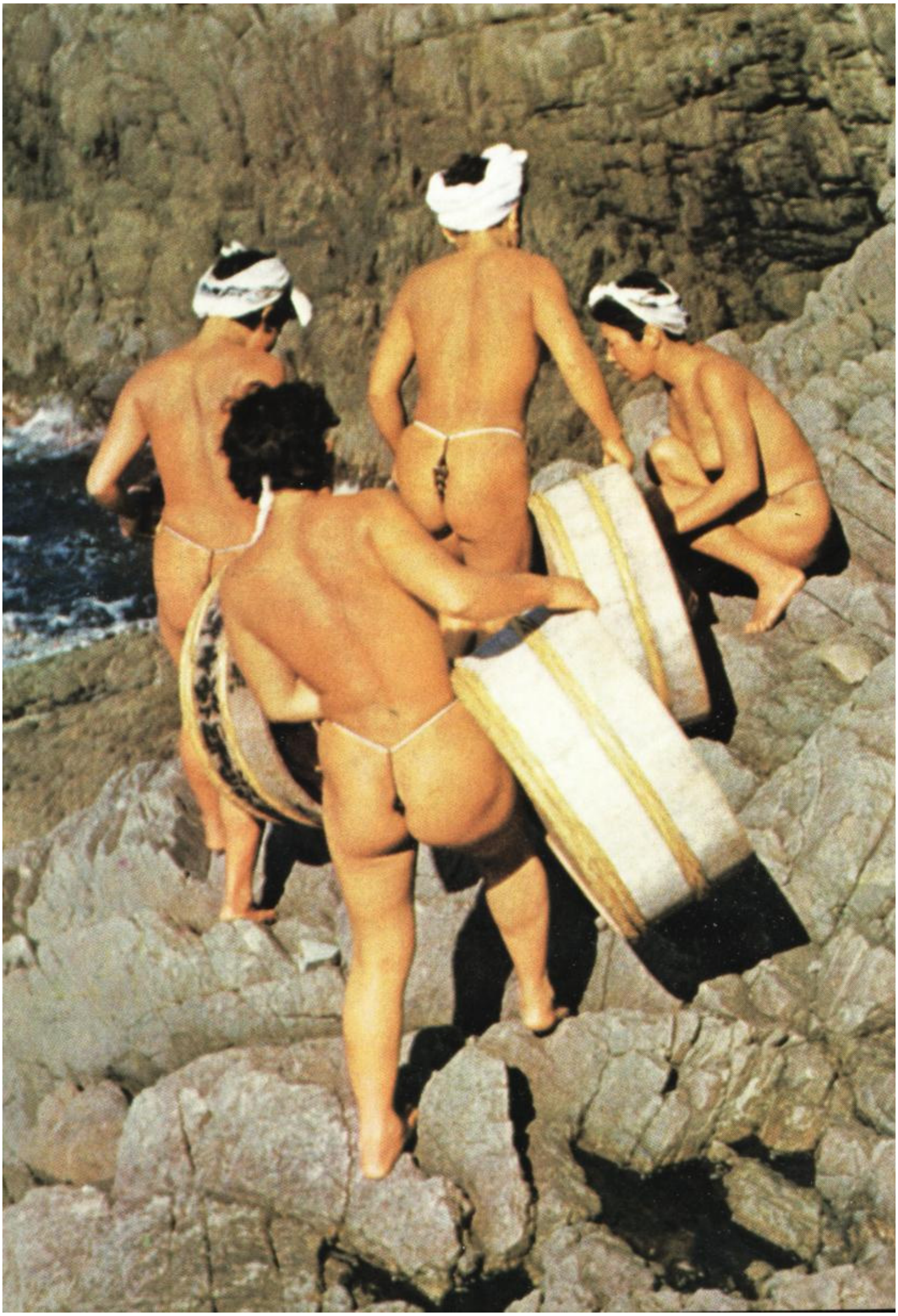
Photograph of modern ama diver in her wet clammy cotton coverall, showing the photographer all the shellfish she has collected from the sea floor.
Picture from Japanese web-site. –
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Photograph Fosco Maraini of Ama diver swimming underwater, from web-site. - http://lnx.whipart.it/artivisive/3201/donne-del-mare-mostra-fosco-maraini.html

Chapter Three - Women Divers

Lynne Cox proved the fact that women can survive swimming in freezing waters. In 1987 this American women swam across the Bering Strait, from the U.S. to Soviet Union with water temperatures at 38-42 degrees Fahrenheit, without wearing a wet suit. She did it wearing only a normal swimsuit, cap and goggles. In 2003 she even swam over a mile in Antarctica! In water barely above freezing point of salt water, and had to push her way through small ice flows.

This is because of the greater degree of subcutaneous fat that women have compared with men, but this doesn't apply to all women. A 'supermodel' type would freeze to death in icy water as quickly as any man, which means any women divers have to have a chubby build, and train her body to endure the cold. There are men who are able to withstand cold water as well as any women diver if they have sufficient fat dispersed over their bodies. Yet even these men do have a real problem diving in cold water, because they can suffer from, what is politely called; 'Frostbite Shorts'. Men have their sexual genitals on the outside of their bodies, and in cold water they can be subjected to frostbite. A study conducted on pearl diving men of the South Pacific, showed that men constantly diving in cold water have fertility problems. This is because having the testicles too long in cold water can harm or kill the sperm within them. As for swimming in Arctic waters, a man could end up castrated if subjected to bad frostbite. Women, of course, don't have these problems, as they have internal genitals.



Photograph by Fosco Maraini from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* of ama divers climbing down the side of a rocky cliff carrying tubs in which to collect shellfish or seaweed when diving.

In the sporting world we are used to men outperforming women, yet there is one sport where women are now outperforming men and that is the sport of marathon open water swimming. In the 21 miles across the English Channel, the first woman to do this was Gertrude Caroline Ederle of USA. In 1926 she broke the record of the fastest man by one hour and fifty-nine minutes. In spite of having to battle through heavy seas in the second half of her swim. Since then the record for the fastest channel has been held by both men and women at different times. (Lynne Cox held this record back in the 1980s.)

Another sport where women can out-perform men is the very modern sport of "free-diving", that is to say diving without the use of oxygen tanks. This sport is greatly surprising scientists as they find that the bodies of trained free divers react exactly like that of a marine mammal in deep dives. In deep free-diving scientists discovered that the human heartbeat would go right down until it is barely beating. The lungs can be crushed until it has little more space than a drink can; yet this has no ill effects on the human body. While what little oxygen left in the body is used to just keep the heart and brain going. This is exactly what happens to the bodies of whales and dolphins when they deep dive. Free divers now go deeper than the rescue divers that tried to save the crew of the doomed Russian Kursk submarine. The Norwegian divers in this rescue bid had to spent five days recovering in a decompression chamber, while a free diver do not suffer from bends at all. It seems that the first moment cold water hits the face of a human diving in the water; the human body starts to behave like an aquatic animal. This makes the human body more than capable of dealing with the problems of deep diving.

As with long distance swimming, women can compete equally with men in free-diving as we see in the case of Tanya Streeter, who at one time held many of these free-diving records.

July 22nd 2003 - Provodenciales, Turks & Caicos.

ABSOLUTE WORLD RECORD ~ Constant Weight Without Fins to 115ft/35m in 1 min 44 seconds.

July 21st 2003 - Provodenciales, Turks & Caicos.

ABSOLUTE WORLD RECORD ~ Variable Weight to 400ft/122m in 3 mins 38 seconds.

(Beat both men's and women's previous World Records - Deborah Andollo/95m and Patrick Musimu/120m)

August 17th 2002 - Provodenciales, Turks & Caicos.

ABSOLUTE WORLD RECORD ~ No Limits to 525ft/160m in 3 mins 26 seconds.

(Beat both men's and women's previous World Records - Mandy Cruickshank/136m and Loic Leferme/154m)

Tanya Streeter has now retired and become a TV presenter so other people have now taken some of her records.

[Photograph of Tanya Streeter, using a monofin, you can read more about her at her web-site. - http://www.redefineyourlimits.com/

Youtube has a video of Tanya Steeter swimming with her monofin as well as other videos of her.- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sH5754dBVw]

If we accept the fact that female humans are very much at home in the sea, because they are able to swim in the open ocean and dive in much the same way as a marine animal, then we have to ask ourselves how in evolutionary terms did women develop these abilities? And why is it that women are better adapted to the water than men? The answer to this is the Aquatic Ape theory, which I will discuss, in a later chapter.

It was probably sightings from outsiders that created the mermaid legend. Fishing villages that used women divers would greatly encourage this legend and embellish it even more, to divert attention away from the fact it was village women who were the mermaids. The reason for this would be, because they didn't want the authorities to ban the practice of women divers. For instance, Walter Traill Dennison, a 19th century visitor, to the Orkney Islands wrote. –

And I have heard a hundred times more about mermaids from the lips of Orkney peasants than I have ever saw in books.

Underwater Photograph by Fosco Maraini from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* by of a ama foraging on the sea floor.

If women divers were still commonplace in the Orkneys at that time, but some were seen my strangers coming into the area, then the locals would try to brainwash the visitors that what they might see in the water were mythical mermaids and not women divers. They might have had good reason to keep quiet about using women divers simply because it was technically against the law. In England they have a curious law that the crown owns everything between the high and low water marks. This includes everything that is washed ashore, so in theory you could be prosecuted for picking up anything from the beach including shellfish. The Crown also owns what is within the territorial waters, which includes all oyster and mussel beds. Also by law; “There are no other general public rights over the foreshore. Thus, there is no right at common law to bathe in the sea”. Which means in theory, you could be prosecuted for going for a swim!

Clearly these laws are not enforced today but perhaps at one time they were. If there were sea gypsies in Europe like there is still in South East Asia, then this is where they would be living and gathering food. So it means at one time; law enforcers could prosecute women divers, for swimming, picking up shellfish from the seabed, or living on the beach. It is true there is no record of people being prosecuted for this, as far as I know, but if the Church and government do not wish it to be known that women can do a physical job better than men, and women are the breadwinners in sea people communities, then they would cover up these prosecutions by simply destroying the paperwork.

Many of the mermaid stories also seem to suggest conflict between the sea people and fishermen and land dwellers. This is true today in South-East Asia, where sea gypsies are blamed for piracy, and condemned for being pagans. For instance in the Faroe Islands, (islands halfway between Scotland and Iceland), in mermaid stories it is claimed that their singing will induce madness and it is well advised to put your thumb in your ears when you hear it. (A very similar story to the story of the sirens in Ancient Greece.) Though the fishermen in the Faroe Islands also claim you can tell when a storm is coming from the behaviour of mermaids. This is similar to the behaviour of the sea-gypsies in South-East Asia who knew a tsunami was coming. The sea-people being more in tune with the sea, knew what to look out for in changing weather conditions. So not all the mermaid legends are hostile, it is mostly the Church who put a negative spin on mermaid sightings. For instance; in 1670 a vicar called Debes saw a mermaid-

There was seen at Faroe, Westward of Wualboe Eide, by many of the inhabitants, as also by others from different parts of Suderoe, a Mer-maid close to the shore. She stood there two hours and a half, and was up to the navel in water. She had long hair on her head, which hung down to the surface of the water all round about her. She held a Fish, with the head downwards, in her right hand.

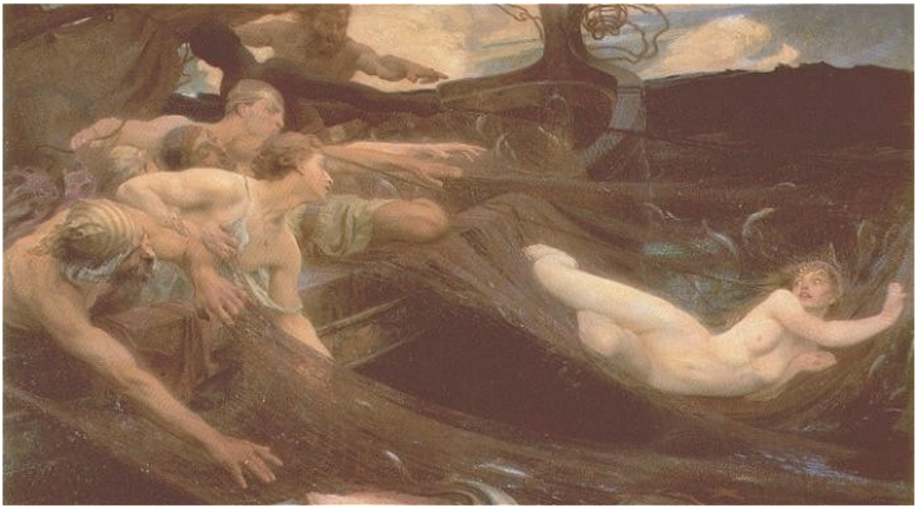
But his reaction to this sighting was-

Whether these monsters do portend Fero any evil hereafter, Time will tell us.

In the Faroe islands there are also stories of mermaids who made themselves a nuisance to fishermen by entangling their lines and snapping off their hooks.

Likewise there are many stories of fishermen who have hooked mermaids with their fishhooks. For instance: About 1701, in Orkney, two fishermen drew up with a hook, a mermaid "having face, arms, breast, shoulders, etc, of a woman, and long hair hanging down the neck; but the nether-part from below the waist hidden in the water". One of the fishermen, in his surprise, drew a knife and stabbed at her, whereupon she cried out and went over backwards, breaking the hook, and was gone.

In some mermaid stories they mention sea cows and bulls, (they weren’t referring to manatees or dugongs) and even claim these cattle have fish tails. Yet there is a logical explanation for this extraordinary story, because in Scotland today there are sheep that live on the beach and feed on seaweed. So it could be that the sea-people likewise did have cattle that also fed on this. One story in Nordstrand, Norway, tells of a merwoman who



The dramatic painting, by Herbert Draper, (1864-1920) is called, “The Sea-Maiden”. Although it is classed as a mermaid picture, she is clearly just an ordinary woman. The artist makes no attempt to put a fish’s tail on her which must raise the question for people who do not know what mermaids really are; why is a normal woman swimming in the sea? Incidents like this may have happened in the past; where women divers have been caught up in fishermen’s nets. (The artist may have been painting a story than was told to him.)

This wouldn’t be a problem if the sea-people and fishermen were on good terms with each other. But we have mermaid stories from the past where fishermen have attacked and even killed mermaids and this might be the case as shown in this painting. We can see clearly the look of fear on the woman’s face and the shock, anger and probably lust of the fishermen, highlighting the conflict between the sea-people and ‘ordinary’ people.

would regularly bring her cattle ashore and allow them to graze on Tibirke Mark. This made the local villages angry; they did not want to provide free grazing to the merwoman’s herd. So one-day they drove her cattle into an enclosure and told her they would say there until she was willing to pay for pasturage.

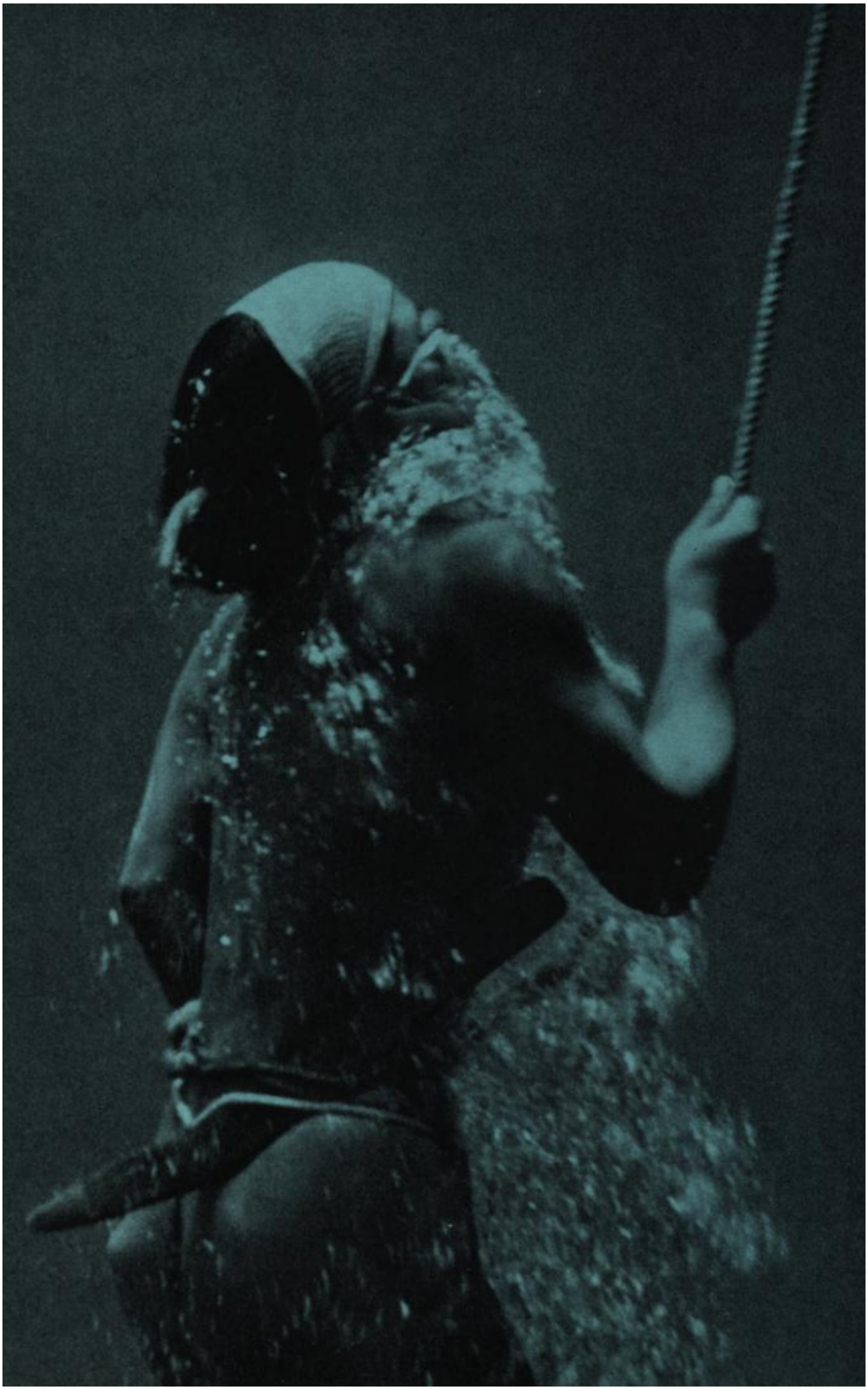
She protested that she had no money so they then demanded from her a beautiful jeweled girdle around her waist. She handed this over and was allowed to drive her cattle back to the seashore. The story goes on to claim she retaliated by causing a sandstorm that blew over the village and half buried the village church. The jeweled girdle she gave them turned out to be made of rushes and was completely worthless. This story tells us that the sea-people probably didn’t use money and were probably completely self-sufficient; this is why the merwoman had no money. The story of the jeweled girdle suggests that what was valuable to the sea-people wasn’t valued by the people on land, and vice-versa. Also as we will see in many mermaid stories the sea people get the blame for many natural disasters on the coast. For instance: In a story from Cornwall a man shot at a merrymaid outside Padstow harbour. She vowed revenge, and a sand bar, (called the Doom Bar) appeared across the harbour making it unusable for large ships as many of them ran aground on it. This suggests some people were blaming all natural phenomena on the sea-people, and believed they had magical powers.

Other folk tales from both Brittany and Wales also show the conflict between the sea-people and those who live on land. This legend is about towns and cities that were swallowed up by the sea. In the Breton version it is the city of Is that was built on land reclaimed from the sea. A king Grallon ruled it, but he had a daughter, Dahut, who was the villain of this story. For an unexplained reason she steals the keys to the dykes and opens the gates and allows the sea to rush in. All the inhabitants are drowned except the king and a priest, who led the king to safety. The sea also swallows up Dahut, but instead of drowning, she turns into a mermaid. She then does what most mythical mermaids do; and is seen combing her golden hair and luring young sailors to their doom through the power of her irresistible singing.

This story is also linked to Cornwall and the lost land of Lyonesse that once existed between Cornwall and the Scilly islands. These stories illustrate the conflict between sea and land people. Farmers want to build levees and sea walls to 'tame' rivers, to drain wetlands and reclaim land from the sea. The sea-people will want to keep everything as it is, so they can continue their ancient ways of foraging in the marshes. So yes, it might of happened in the past where farmers have built dykes and drain the salt marshes for farming land only for the sea-people to breach the dykes and flood the land again. In such conditions there could be violent conflict between the sea and land people. This hostility may have resulted in the killing of mermaids.

There have been reports mermaids being killed in other parts of the world. In Ceylon in the 1550s, Jesuits recorded that seven mermaids were caught in fishnets off the coast of Ceylon. A physician called Bosquez performed autopsies on them and the findings were published in the annual, *Relations Of The Society Of Jesus*. They concluded that mermaids were anatomically identical to humans. Presumably because, they were in fact humans, and not mythical creatures. It would be unlikely that women divers were caught and drowned in fishing nets by accident. The fishermen would have to be blind and deaf, not to see or hear them in the water.

Christian Missionaries in Angola in Africa in 1700 claimed that the locals were catching mermaids and eating them. This caused a theological problem with the missionaries because they said the mermaids are at least half-human. This then raised the question; is this, an act of cannibalism? It was finally decided that because mermaids didn't have souls it was all right to eat them, but it could be granted to them if they married a Christian. Now it could be that these were dugongs, but it would be very unlikely that the locals thought that dugongs were



Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* of a ama diver returning to the surface.

women with a fish tail. So it could be a mix up in the translation, when communicating with the locals, but as we don't have a detailed description, we can't be sure. The Christian Missionaries clearly did really believe they were true mermaids, and they were in effect saying; that murder and cannibalism was all right against people who weren't Christians.

This behaviour is not that unusual in the past. As previously pointed out in Australia during the 19th century there was an unofficial policy of genocide against the Aboriginal people. It has been estimated that probably 700,000 native people were murdered. They were referred to by the white settlers as, 'vermin', 'loathsome', 'a nuisance' and 'scarcely human'. There were even shooting parties that went out killing Aboriginals as a 'sport'.

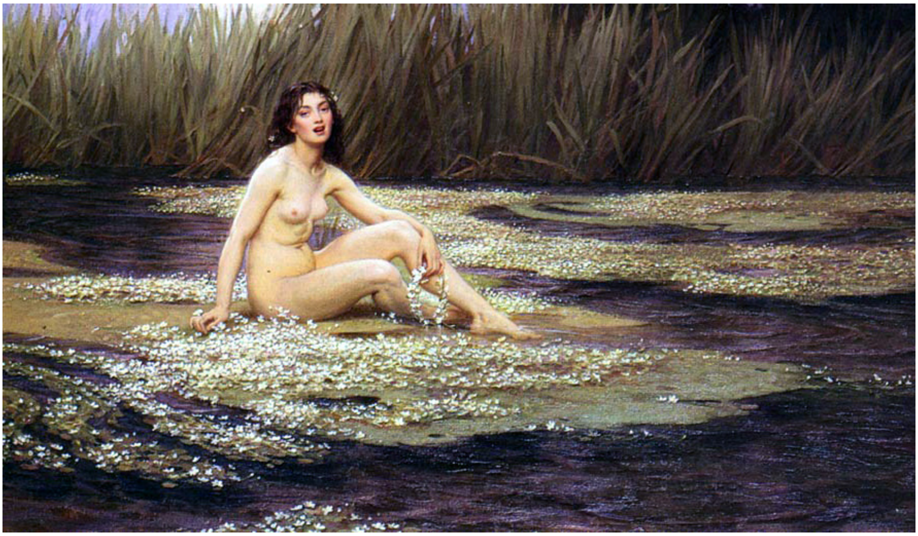
In the book, *Natural history of Amboiana*, two mermaids are reported, a mermaid was found in 1727 and presented to the Indonesian Dutch governor Francoise Valentija. Another was captured off the coast of Borneo, but refused all food and died within four days. If the mermaids were presented to the governor they would be unlikely to have fish's tails, they were more likely sea gypsies that even today, still live in the area.

There have been cases in Scandinavian countries of conflict between mermen. Near Bergen in Norway a merman was captured and presented before King Hiorleif to sing but unlike sirens he had a terrible voice. This sounds a humorous story, but then we are told; he was dumped into a barrel where he dissolved overnight, which suggests he was drowned in a barrel. In Denmark there is a story where two senators also caught a merman but he threatened to sink their ship if he wasn't released.

In the Hebrides, (Scotland) there is a legend of the Blue Men of Minch, these were mermen who would attack boats. This also suggests there was a conflict at one time between fishermen and sea-people. This also seems to be the case in Brazil.

In *A Treatis of Brasil* (1601) it was claimed that Brazilian mermen were so vicious, that is was fatal even to think about them, as they would strangle and crush their victims. The idea that it was fatal even to think about mermen, does again suggest censorship. And the fact that mermen were attacking and killing people suggests they were in a war, which they must have lost, because we don't hear of sea-people in Brazil today.

The same is true of other countries: The Russians called mermaids Rusalkas and claimed they will drown swimmers. The Norwegian mermaid was called a Havfine, and had a reputation of having an unpredictable temper. They were known to be either very kind or incredibly cruel, and it was considered unlucky to see one of them. This again suggests censorship and conflict between sea-people and land-based people. The same is true in Germany. There are many mermaids in German mythology; they are mostly fresh-water mermaids living in wetlands before farmers built levees around rivers and the swamps were drained. They were called Meerfrau, Melusine, (double tailed mermaid), Nix, (male) or Nixe (female). The Nix and Nixe had a reputation of luring people to water and drowning them and demanding human sacrifice. For outsiders wetlands can be dangerous places, people can be caught in quicksand or bogs or simply drown falling into lakes if they are not very good swimmers. Though with the clear hostilely against the mermaid people, there were many negative stories about them. It was claimed they were like sirens, and their beautiful singing would lure people to their death on the Rhine. The danger of the wetlands may have protected the mermaids way of life for a long time, until the swamps were drained. Nixes were called a form of elf, but it seems they would appear in the market and could be identified if the corner of the Nize's apron was wet. This again suggests she was just an ordinary woman, and no different to any other woman at the market. On the Rhine they were called Lorelei, from which the town got its name. Suggesting that these mermaids were once part of the wider community, before there was a conflict about the use of land.



This painting, by Herbert James Draper, 1864 -1920 is called "The Water Nixie", which is a German name for mermaids that live in freshwater. Again he doesn't show a woman with a fish tail but a normal women. He is accurate in showing the Nixie living in a swamp where people once found an abundance of food. As was explained in recent TV program by the BBC called *Ray Mears' Wild Food*, which informs us that before farming, humans found the majority of their foods in wetlands. As the wetlands and coastal regions, have far more food for hunter/gathers than drier regions inland. Most wetlands have now been drained, as farming has become the main source of food for humans.

Captain Sir Richard Whitbourne, in his journal Discourse and Discovery of New-Found land (1620), wrote-

Now also I will not omit to relate something of a strange Creature that I first saw there in the year 1610 in a morning early as I was standing by the waterside) in the Harbour of St. Johns, which I espied very swiftly to come swimming towards me, looking cheerfully as it had been a woman, by the Face) Eyes Nose, Mouth, Chin, Ears, Neck and Forehead: It seemed to be so beautiful and in those parts so well proportioned, having round about upon the head, all blew strakes resembling hair, down to the Neck (but certainly it was hair) for I beheld it long, and another of my companions also, yet living, that was not then far from me; and seeing the same coming so swiftly towards me I stepped back, for it was come within the length of a Pike. Which when this strange Creature saw that I went from it, it presently thereupon dived a little under water, and did swim to the place where before I landed; whereby I beheld the shoulders and hackle down to the middle, to be as square, white and smooth as the back of a man, and from the middle to the hinder part, pointing in proportion like a broad hooked Arrow; how it was proportioned in the forepart from the Neck and shoulders I know not; but the same came shortly after unto a Boat, wherein one William Hawkridge then my servant, was, that hath bin since a Captain in a ship to the East Indies and is later there implored again by Sir Thomas Smith) in the like voyage, and the same Creature did put both his hands upon the side of the Boat, and did strive to come in to him and others then in the said Boat: whereat they were afraid and one of them stroke it a full blow on the head: where at it fell off from them: and afterwards it came to two other Boat in the Harbour: the men in them for fear fled to land: this (I suppose) was a mermaid. Now because divers have written much of mermaids I have presumed to relate, what is most cenaine of such a strange Creature that was seen in New-found-land: whether it were a mermaid or no, I know not; I leave it for others to judge. (I have changed this account to modern spelling).

It is of interest that he reported that; “I beheld the shoulders and hackle down to the middle, to be as square, white and smooth as the back of a man, and from the middle to the hinder part, pointing in proportion like a broad hooked Arrow”. In other words, the mermaid had the wide muscled shoulders and back of a man, which is what you find in modern day competitive female swimmers. They likewise develop powerful shoulder muscles, which with a slim waist means that have a V shaped back.

The Church’s negative propaganda about the sea-people, made ordinary sailors frightened of them, and that resulted in them being attacked.

A similar story is told by John Josselyn in *An Account of Two Voyages M New England* published in 1674, in which he wrote:

One Mr. Mittin related of a Triton or Mereman which he saw in Cascobay'. He then goes on to say; Encountered with a Triton, who laying his hands upon the side of the Canow, had one of them chopped off with a Hatchet by Mr. Mittin, which was in all respects like the hand of a man, the

Triton presently sunk, dying the water with his purple blood, and was no more.

In Japan it is claimed that eating the flesh of mermaids can give you immortality, which is a strong motivation for people believing this myth to kill and eat ama divers, and there are stories of this happening. For instance there is the story of Yaohime or Ybao-kuni who ate meat given to her by a strange man. It turned out it was the flesh of a mermaid and she lived for 800 years still looking like a fifteen-year-old girl when she died shrines were built in her honour all over Japan.

In Europe there are also stories of mermaids who live for hundreds of years. Although this is clearly an exaggeration, this might be to do with the seafood diet of women divers. People in diving communities ate far better and had more nutritious food than people living inland. Ama and henyo women have been known to keep on working into their 70s, which would be unusual for ordinary people in the past, in farming communities, most of whom had very poor and restricted diets.

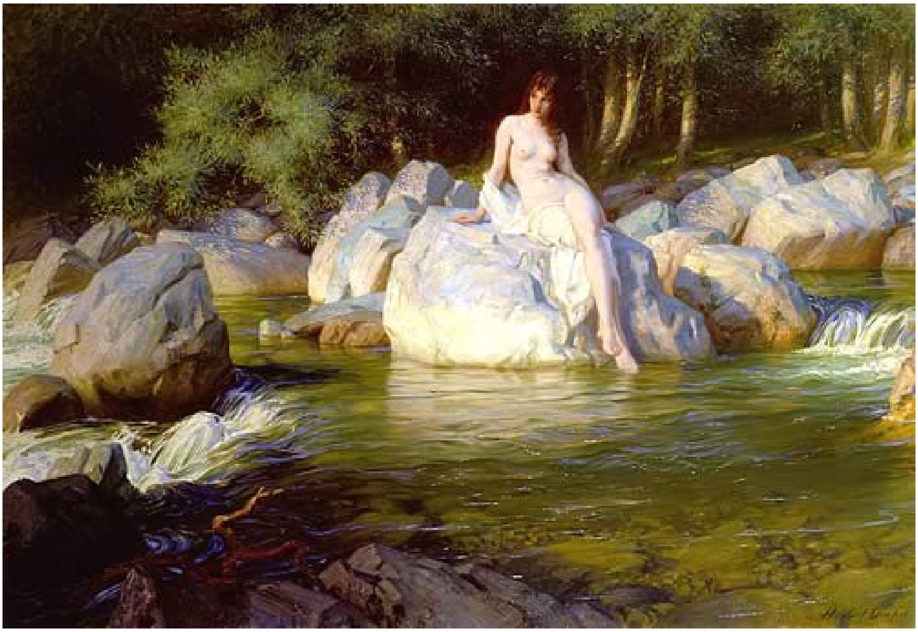
Ama swimming underwater. From web-site.-
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Fortunately not all people would go along with the Church's propaganda against women divers. So in some places the locals would encourage the stories of mermaids being mythical creatures, to protect them. The Church might have gone along with this, preferring stories of mythical mermaids rather than the fact of diving women, who could do a job better than men. So everyone involved, had a reason to keep it secret. This then is why mermaid stories are really a secret chapter of women's history. The mermaid people who lived on the coast or inland in wetlands lived a very different lifestyle to 'ordinary people'. The biggest differences seem to be that the landlubbers lived in patriarchal societies while the mermaid communities lived in matriarchal communities.

A few of which have survived to this day, like the Mosuo in China who live around Lugu Lake, whom have been dubbed by one commentator as "The sirens of Lugu Lake". Somehow their matriarchy has survived because up until the 1970s the area was cut off from the outside world. It is claimed that this area was the original Shangri-La that James Hilton wrote about in his book, *The Lost Horizon.* Unfortunately a road was built to this isolated area and with the ease of modem transport the Mosuo people are now threatened by pollution in lake Lugu and tourism.

Ownership is passed down the female line in Mosuo and the women are free to change husbands whenever they feel like it. Unfortunately rumors of the Mosuo's people's free and easy sexual customs have attracted brothels and sexual tourists to the area. With prostitutes being imported from outside and claiming to be Mosuo women to satisfy the fantasies of their clients. The same is also true in Japan where strip-club owners have made claims that their strippers are ama divers. (Probably another reason why ama divers now wear unglamorous and impracticable cotton clothing.)

Underwater photograph of ama diver foraging on sea floor, from Japaness web site; http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html



The above picture by Herbert James Draper is called “The Kelpie”. Which is a curious name. As it is also the name of the Loch Ness Monster.

Kelpie in ancient Scotland was known as a water horse like the Loch Ness Monster or a water Devil. Yet Draper portrays the kelpie as a beautiful woman!? This could mean two things; either this painting was suggesting that women and certainly naked women are devils. This would be the attitude of many Christians at the time he painted this picture, or it could have another explanation. In calling this beautiful naked woman a Kelpie or Water Devil he is hinting at the origins of the words like Satan, Lucifer and the Devil, as they all once referred to Goddesses.

There is a mystery about the name of the Egyptian Goddess Isis. All other ancient Egyptian deities like Ra, Horus or Nut are known by their Egyptian names but Isis is always referred to, only by a Greek translation. A clue to this mystery is that the Egyptian name of the Goddess Isis is As Set. Now the problem with this is that it was from the God Set or Seth comes the word Satan.

The Goddess Isis in her original form was the Egyptian Great Mother or "Queen of heaven". She ruled alone and was seen as the Creatrix. Then she had a son called Osiris, whose name means in ancient Egyptian "son of Isis", or in Egyptian “son of As Set”, in time Osiris became Isis brother and then her husband. (This happened to many Goddesses were they have a son but in time the son becomes either her brother or lover and then her husband). When he became her husband Isis had another son called Horus, though in his original form he was lame and deformed because he was only born of the mother and was without a father. Horus also had a twin bother called Set or Sut, from which the word Satan comes. He was the evil brother that opposed Horus and was responsible for murdering Osiris. In later versions of the story he cut up Osiris into fourteen pieces but then Osiris was brought back to life by Isis and became Horus. In others versions of this story Set was Osiris brother, and Osiris fathered Horus. Yet Set as it turned out was an older God than either Osiris or Horus, and he was once a benevolent God. Set in Egyptian also means "Queen" or "Princess" and Au Set means "exceeding Queen". So it seems Set was once the Goddess Isis.

Set or Sata was the original Egyptian Mother Goddess and Egypt was once known as the Land of Sata. Then Set became both male and female with the feminine version being As Set or Isis as in the Greek translation. The male Set was then known as a benevolent serpent god who would die and then be reborn in the womb of the Mother Goddess, As Set. (Making him the original resurrection god, that Jesus Christ later became). Later on the male Set became an evil god and the god Osiris took his place. So a new story was created. In this version As Set or Isis would swallow Osiris whole and then he would be reborn from her as the God Horus. Then in later versions of the same story, it was male Set who murdered Osiris and cut him up into many pieces and it was the female Set or As Set who put him back together again.

The religion of Isis later became very popular in Greece and the Roman Empire, which created a problem when Rome became Christian, because the Judeo-Christian devil was called Satan, which was the same name of a very popular Goddess Isis. So not wanting to cause trouble with the followers of Isis the Egyptian name of Isis had to be censored in Europe.

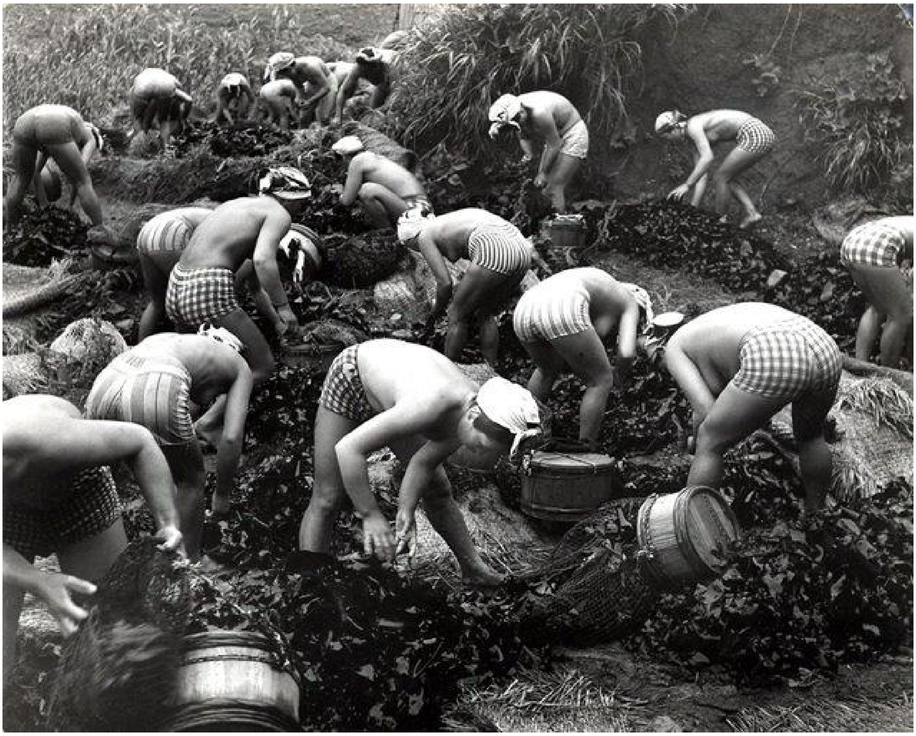
Another popular name for the Devil is Lucifer who was known as “The Light bringer”. In Latin Lucifer means Morning Star and the Morning Star is Venus named after a Roman Goddess, who was originally a tribal pre-Roman Great Mother in ancient times. In many cultures planet Venus is named after Goddesses like Ishtar the Babylonian Goddess who was known in Revelation in the Bible as the “Great Whore” or the “Mother Of Harlots”. Though Interestingly Jesus in Revelations calls himself “The Bright Morning Star” (chapter 22 verse 16), suggesting that he is also Lucifer.

The Word Devil comes from the ancient Indo-European word Devi which means Goddess and is still used in India today to mean both Goddess and women. It is also from the word Devi we get the words divine and divinity. (It is not unusual to have feminine words degraded in this way. The word cunt is a swear word in our society. Yet it comes from the Goddess Cunti or Kunda and from this word also comes the words kin, (family), kind and country.

So it could be that Herbert James Draper being a well-educated man may have known all this and expressed it by calling the beautiful naked women in his picture a Kelpie, or water Devil. This in itself would also be a subtle attack on the Christian Church for the way they have blackened the name of mermaids or the sea-people by referring to them as Devils.

Not only has the Christian Church and other patriarchal religions have for centuries attacked, mermaids, witches and matriarchy and done their best to censor all knowledge of empowered women. The same is also true of historians, archaeologists and paleontologists as well. The evidence for mermaids doesn't only come from mermaids myths and ama and haenyo divers, in also comes from knowledge of pre-history that has never been told to the general public.

Photograph showing the reality of ama divers in the modern world, walking along a tarmac highway to the beach. Not only are their bodies covered up but their faces are partly covered as well, with head coverings that look like an Islamic Hijab. Photograph from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html



Photograph by Iwase Yoshiyuki called "Havesting Seaweed 1956" from website.

http://www.iwase-photo.com/ama1.html

The same web-site also writes about the daily life of a ama diver in the following paragraph. -

Water temperatures on the Onjuku coast are bearable only between June and September. Large harvests were impossible to haul up in strong currents, so tides had to be favourable, limiting diving days to about 20 per year. Ama dive in three sessions a day, requiring extensive eating and warming at the fireside between runs. A good daily harvest required 60 to 80 dives of up to two minutes each, so ama had to develop and maintain substantial body fat to guard against hypothermia. With such rigors and risks, ama were paid enormous salaries, often making more in the short season than the village men made the whole year. In the late 1920s there were around 200 ama atctive in Onjuku and the seven harbours of the region (Kohaduki, Ohaduki, Futamata, Konado, Tajiri, Koura and Nagahama). By the late 1960s, they had disappeared. This body of work stands as the final, most comprehensive visual document of the life and work of these divers.

Another photograph by Iwase Yoshiyuki from website,
http://www.iwase-photo.com/ama1.html
called "Hauling up a fishing boat 1950"
There are 45 ama photographs on the site showing amas in their daily life at work, between 1935-1956, while others are posed glamour photographs like the photo below. Unfortunately there are no underwater photographs.

Picture from film "Violated Paradise" stills are available from website.-
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/capture/ama/capture-ama.htm

Another picture from film "Violated Paradise", this film is available at.http://theaquabank.com/videos.php?userid=2480&id=1227&list=13

As it turns out Ama is a Chinese word meaning, sea-woman, sea-man or sea-person. In the paper, "Naked Divers: A case of Identity and dress in Japan" by D.P. Martinez she discusses the origins of the meaning of the word ama. To quote.-

The ama dive for seaweed and shellfish, particularly abalone (awabi) but not for pearls. They have a long history in Japan: the presence of large shell mounds from the Neolithic indicates that they have been on the islands for a least 2,000 years (Nukada 1965: 27). There is also clear evidence that divers in northern Kyushu migrated from Cheju Island in Korea "a long time ago" while the "Ama of Shima in Mie Prefecture and those of Kada, Wakayama Prefecture, both on the Pacific side are presumed to be of different origin" (Birukawa 1965: 63).

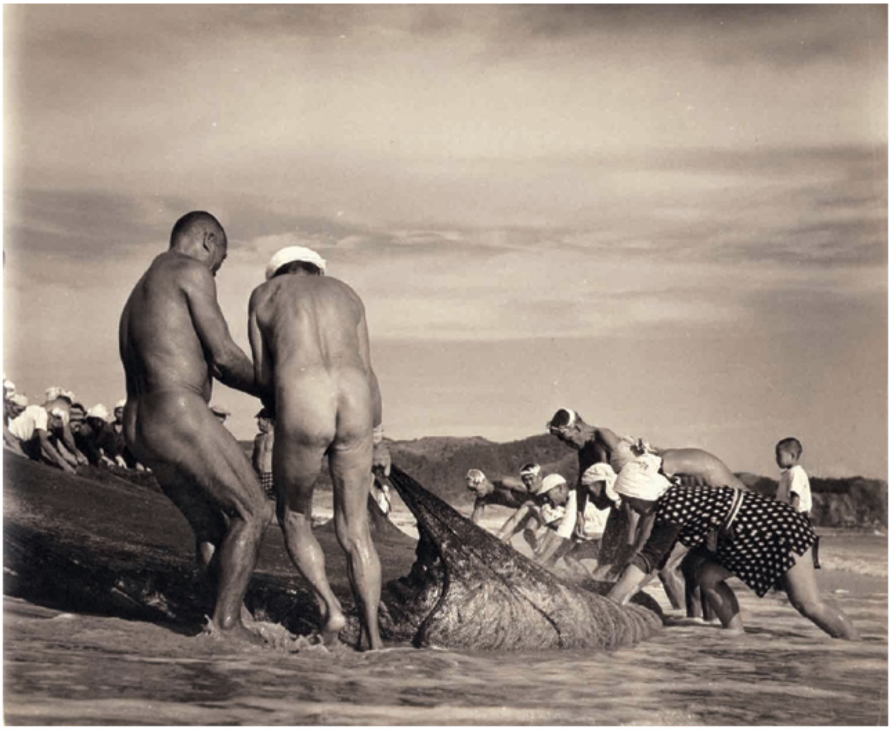
However, as will be discussed, divers have also long been an object of Japanese academic research, and in this context they seem to exist in a mythical realm of their own: they have been variously described by physiologists as physically and therefore potentially racially different; by folklorists and anthropologists as the remnants of an ancient Japanese matriarchy; or, linked to the notion of a different race, as descendants of Koreans.

[The controversy over whether ama in Japan are descendants of Koreans can be explained by the fact that up until recently there were close links between the haenyo on Korean islands and the ama on the west coast of Japan. So while the ordinary Japanese lost their connections with the Koreas, but the amas never lost them.]

The divers of Mie Prefecture (where I happened to do my fieldwork) feel free to offer their own theory on the origins of divers through the folk etymology they give for the word ama. The term, they say, is derived from Amaterasu, the sun goddess who is also the official ancestress of the Imperial family; this implies, then, that they also descend from the main Japanese deity. This mythic connection to Amaterasu link Mie ama closely to the Imperial line…

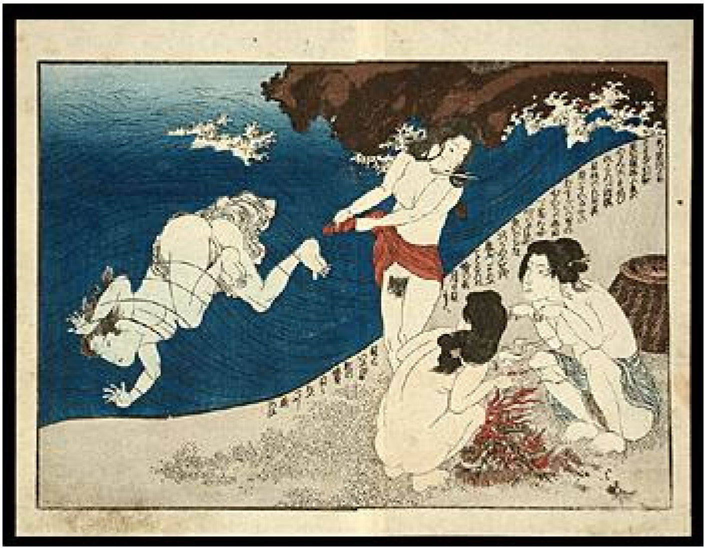
Whatever their origins, at one time it seems that all the people on the islands we now call Japan did dive; the Chinese dynastic histories during the Wei Dynasty (A.D. 220-265) noted of the place they called Queen country: The people are fond of fishing; regardless of the depth of the water, they dive to capture fish" (Tsunoda 1951: 10). As time went on, and rice cultivation was introduced from China, diving (and fishing) became specialized skills, with the people who practised them becoming more marginalized from the mainstream culture. While fishing remained an important source of food, the fact that the social structure, in imitation of China, was based on settled agricultural communities meant that divers and fishermen were rarely mentioned in historic documents (Samsom 1931: 45)

Divers do appear in other sorts of documents from the eighth through the thirteenth centuries (Christian era), that is, as the subjects of *evocative poems written by courtiers. In these poems, the female divers appear to hold many associations, for the ancient noblemen and women: they represent melancholy, solitude, nature and freedom. Their nakedness is not shocking (farming women worked bare-breast in the summer), but romantic and picturesque.*



Photograph by Iwase Yoshiyuki of both men and women pulling up a fishing net onto the beach, which he called "Uniting their efforts 1953"
http://www.iwase-photo.com/onjuku.html

There is some controversy whether both the ama and haenyo dived completely nude in the past. It is claimed that the thongs or bathers that amas used up until the 1960s was only introduced at the start of the 20th century. There is evidence that public nudity was perfectly acceptable to both men and women in ama villages. The above photograph, shows men in a ama village working completely nude. Which suggests that perhaps the thongs or bathers that the amas are photographed in, are worn at the request of the photographer, as he would know it would be hard to sell any photographs of totally nude amas. In modern times amas wear clothes while swimming or a wet-suit because they are now part of the tourist industry. This is because if amas continued to swim nude or even topless, it would cause too much controversy as we would have men ogling at them.



Japanese woodblock print Kunisada (1786-1864).

This print like other prints of the period shows ama divers wearing a wrap around skirt. Again it could be that amas perhaps wore impracticable skirts when outsiders came to their villages, like the artist who painted the above picture. The artist shows us clearly just how impracticable there skirts were as they fail to protect their modesty when diving or wringing the water out of them, and one ama in the picture cannot be bothered to wear one.

The rubber wet-suits that modern haenyo and ama divers use has also changed the nature of these women divers at explained in the paper; "Naked Divers: A case of Identity and dress in Japan" by D.P. Martinez

The hard physical labour required by diving had other interesting repercussions. In the 1930s physiologists discovered that the women in ama communities tended to be taller and heavier than the norm for Japanese women. They also could tolerate long hours in very cold water, something non-divers could not do. Thus, for some researchers this raised a question about their origins and whether they might not be Japanese at all. Physiological studies of the ama tended then to group Koreans and Japanese divers together, using the same term for both, since physically they were alike. However in the 1960s, the loss of diver's ability to withstand low water temperatures because they had taken to wearing wetsuits meant that for some physiologist the ama were no longer interesting (Hong 1983, private communication). The differences between divers and the main population are now seen to be ones of diet and of adaptation which anyone could develop if they begin diving young enough, rather than actual racial differences due to different gene pool.

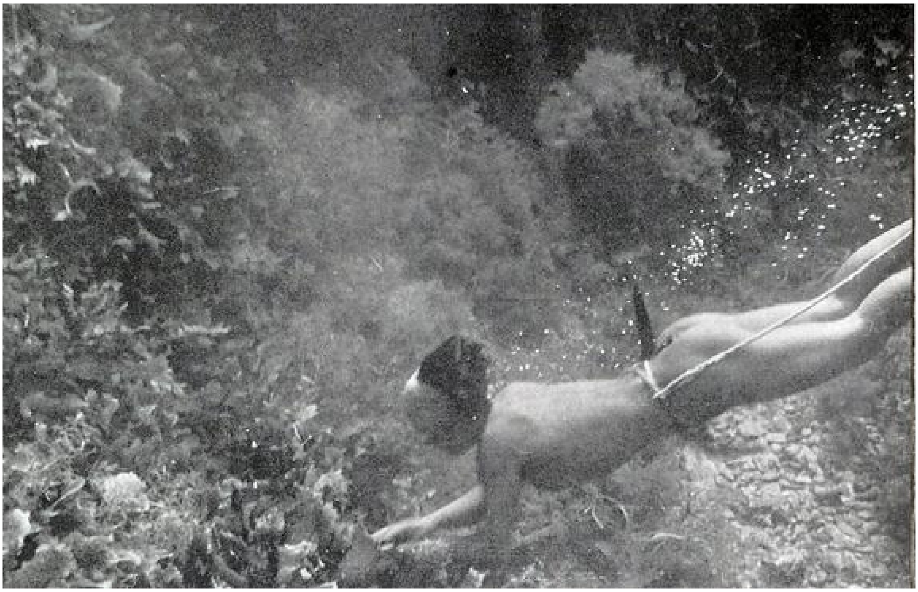
This Festival called the Kanamara Matsuri (Festival of the Steel Phallus) may look very shocking to people outside Japan. But before the rise of religions and doctrines like Christianity, Islam and Confucianism they were commonplace throughout the world. In ancient Greece and Rome before Christianity they had the Dionysus and Bacchus Festivals that celebrated sexuality. Sex and religion were closely linked in other religions like in the Tantra, a Hindu sect and Taoism, an ancient Chinese religion.

In ancient Goddess religions everything to do with childbirth was seen as very holy, including sex. These Goddess religions made sacred, sexual intercourse; menstruation, childbirth and breast-feeding. Then when completely male dominated religions took over like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all these things were made sinful, unclean or taboo. These attitudes exist even today, where mothers are made to feel ashamed of themselves for breast-feeding in public. Back in the 1950s and 60s male doctors in western countries all but banned breast-feeding, claiming that cow's milk was better for the child! It was only later scientific research showed the obvious fact that that human milk was best for human babies.

The free and easy attitude that the Shinto religion had about sexuality and nudity, probably allowed the women divers to continue in Japan, where it was banned throughout the rest of the world, except in the isolated Korean Islands of Mara, Udo and Cheju, (Jeju).

You can read more about this at the following web-sites.-

http://babibubebo.com/2008/04/07/kanamara-matsuri-festival-of-the-steel-phallus/
http://neilduckett.com/women-wearing-fundoshi/
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/capture/natsumatsuri/capture-natsumatsuri.htm
http://metropolis.co.jp/tokyotravel/tokyojapantravel/365/tokyojapantravelinc.htm



Underwater photograph by Fosco Maraini from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Chapter Four - The Aquatic Ape Theory

What has been taught to us all is that man has always been the breadwinner. From the time of the Stone Age it was ‘natural’ for man to go out and hunt for food and bring it back to his adoring wife. She will then cook it for him and wait on her lord and master hand and foot. But what if this cosy scene of domestic bliss wasn’t true? What would happen if there were evidence that man wasn’t the natural breadwinner of the human race, and it was more likely that women were the breadwinner. That means it was she who brought home the ‘bacon’, and it was he who would be looking after the children and home. A vast number of people would find such a thought totally preposterous.

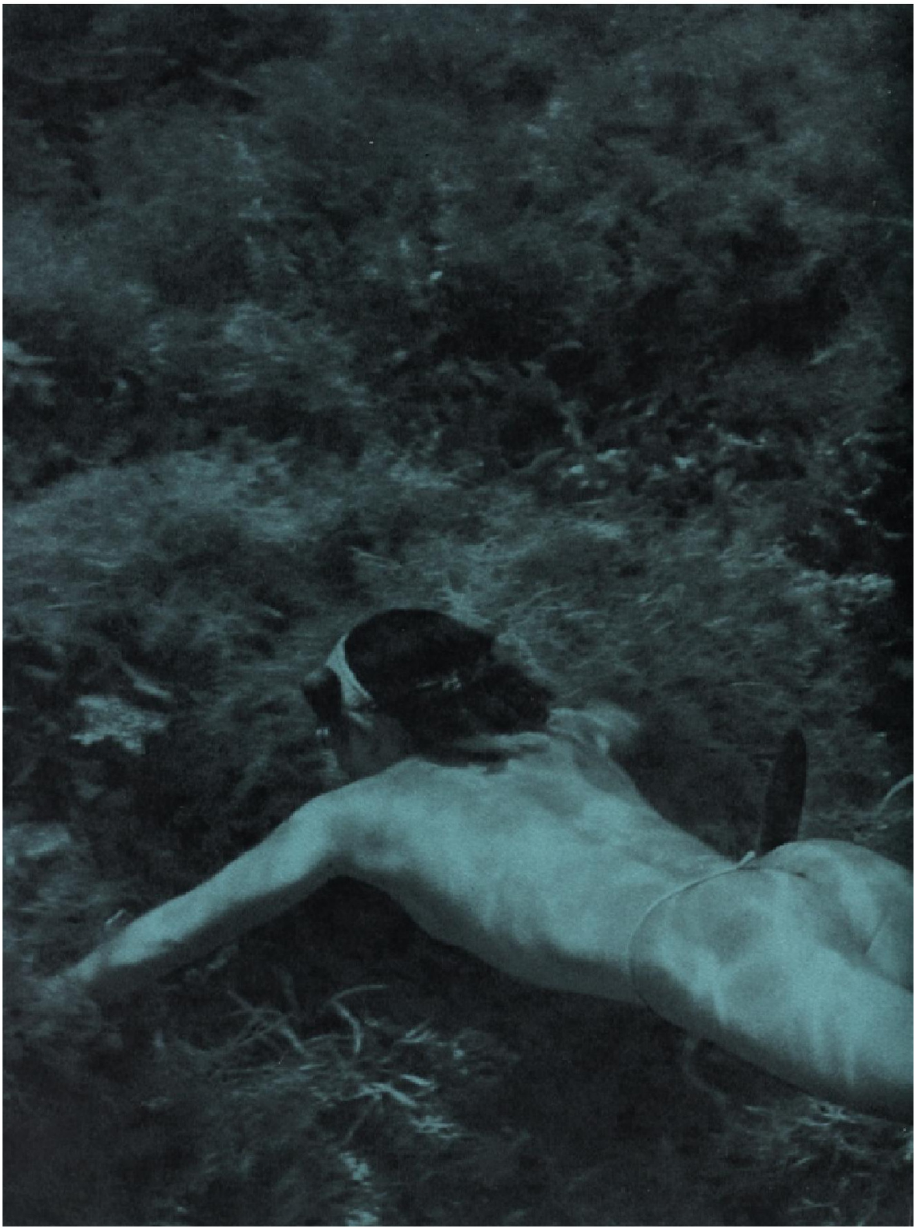
A secret war is going on in the scientific community, about this, with two competing theories, one of which suggests that male dominance is ‘normal’ for human behaviour and a competing theory that gives woman a more prominent role. In the 1950’s paleontologists thought they had worked out the how humans became different from apes, in the “great white hunter” theory, or as it is called now, the savannah theory. This theory states that humans became different from apes through hunting. In a time of global warming, the trees in Africa were decreasing, because of increasingly dry weather. Our ape ancestors were forced to come out of the trees and live on the savannah. No longer able to feed themselves on fruit, leaves and nuts they found on trees, these apes became scavengers and progressed to learn hunting with crude clubs and spears. So it was the hunting skills that made humans so brainy, and man became the ‘killer ape’. Off course in this cosy picture women had very little input. After all wherever you go in the world it has always been men who hunt and women who gather. So you find in many of the books expounding this theory, women are hardly mentioned at all. After all, we live in a man’s world and women are only good for looking after children. So it is not surprising to find that the proponents of the savannah theory are all men.

But the 1960s - 70s was the time of the ‘women’s liberation movement’, or as we call it today feminism, and there was one feminist called Elaine Morgan who was very unhappy with the savannah theory. So she threw an intellectual grenade at the savannah theory in her book *The Descent of Woman*. The title itself was provocative as it was similar to the title of the book, *The Descent of Man* by Charles Darwin, the founder of the theory of evolution.

This mere woman, who didn’t even have a scientific degree, had the audacity to not only attack the savannah theory; but also put forward an alternative hypothesis, called the aquatic ape theory. The scientific community reacted with silence but what she was proposing wasn’t anything new; it was a theory that has been within the scientific community for a long time. In fact this theory was as old as the savannah theory but male scientists simply preferred the savannah theory rather than the aquatic ape theory. After all, the entire savannah theory was very macho and gave men the prominent role in our evolution. The aquatic ape theory on the other hand was very suspect as it questions the ‘natural’ dominance of man in our society, and gives women an important role.

The aquatic ape theory came from a scientific anomaly noticed by marine biologists. They knew that warm-blooded aquatic animals like seals, dolphins and penguins had a layer of blubber around them to keep them warm in the water. So it was a puzzle that human beings had a similar layer of blubber over their bodies, which is very unusual for land animals. So it was speculated that humans were for a time aquatic, in their evolutionary past. Max Westenhöffer in Germany first put this theory into print in 1942. This idea was kicked around in scientific circles and was even mentioned in Desmond Morris’s book *The Naked Ape* that helped popularized the savannah theory to the general public.

Then in 1960 a professor called Sir Alistair Hardy was invited to talk to a sub-aqua club. To make his talk interesting to his sub-aqua audience he decided to tell them about the aquatic ape theory. It had interested him for thirty years, but he hadn’t written any scientific papers on it because he knew it could ruin his career. (Which is strange when you think about it. Science is supposed to be the unbiased assessment of facts, so putting forward an alternative theory shouldn’t damage anyone’s career,



Underwater photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island.*

Here we can see an ama searching among the seaweed at the floor of the sea for shellfish. Tucked in the rope around her waist is an iron bar, which she will use to dig out any shellfish that has glued itself to any rocks. She has to do all this on one lungful of air.

if the facts were being assessed without bias. But this is clearly not the case when it comes to the aquatic ape theory). What he didn't know was that one of the members of the sub-aqua club was also a newspaper reporter. As a result, the reporter wrote down what Hardy had said and sent it to the British Sunday papers. Then it was reported all over the world. Unfortunately the papers didn't understand the theory and some reported that Hardy believed humans evolved from dolphins. The scientific community then closed ranks and kept quiet about it and the whole story died because no scientists would talk to the press, and this theory. But the newspaper story greatly interested Elaine Morgan who got in touch with Sir Alistair Hardy. When she discovered that he had no intention of writing about the theory, she decided to write about it herself. The scientific community felt they could safely ignore her; she was after all only a woman and didn't have a scientific degree.

The one thing you can say about Elaine Morgan was that she didn't give up easily. She did at first get the backing of Sir Alistair Hardy but in the end he had to think about his career, and dropped out. Elaine Morgan, being an outsider, didn't have a scientific career to worry about, so she was free to write whatever she liked. So she continued to write and publish four more books on the theory, called - *The Aquatic Ape, The Descent of the Child, The Aquatic Ape Hypothesis* and *The Scars of Evolution*. Her persistence paid off as the Aquatic ape theory began to be discussed in scientific journals, but her success meant that she was open to attack. For instance in the book *Strange Creations: Aberrant Ideas of Human Origins from Ancient Astronauts to Aquatic Apes,* by Donna Kossy, Elaine Morgan was compared with creationists, people who believe in the Extraterrestrial Origins of civilization and even leaders of suicide cults. This is the type of attacks that Elaine Morgan has to put up with.

But on the positive side people are now beginning to accept her theories. For instance BBC radio on the 12 and 19 April 2005 broadcast two programs by Sir David Attenborough on the aquatic ape theory, and gave it a favourable review. This is because the evidence is stacking up more and more towards the aquatic ape theory and against the savannah theory.

Phillip Tobias, a strong advocate for the savannah theory for many years, declared to a scientific audience in London. "The savannah hypothesis is no more! Open that window and throw it out!" Yet many years earlier that said: "Ever since Sir Alister Hardy put it forward in 1960, it has been scorned, derided, made fun of. Nobody has really taken it seriously. You either burst into guffaws of uncontrollable laughter or you tap your head in respect of the person speaking it." So we can see that even a committed supporter of the savannah theory had to change his mind because the scientific evidence for it is so weak and the evidence for the aquatic ape theory is so strong. So in this way at least Phillip Tobias is behaving like a true scientist and is being guided by the evidence. The same cannot be said for many other scientists who are still clinging desperately to a watered down version of the savannah theory.

As far as Elaine Morgan is concerned, she has won the argument many times over, but many paleontologists still stubbornly refuse to accept the aquatic ape theory. If you go on the Internet you will find many people still extremely hostile to it, still claiming that the aquatic ape theory is not ‘proven’. The savannah theory was never proven either, but this hasn’t stopped scientists claiming to the public that it was science fact. So what is it about the aquatic ape theory that causes so much hostility?

The foundation of science is that you look at the facts, without bias. Now this is a wonderful ideal and is the reason why science has become a powerful tool in understanding our world. But the fact is, that scientists are in the end human beings. Being dispassionate observers might be the ideal, but scientists themselves have emotions and bias like everyone else.

The big attraction of the savannah theory is that it portrays men as heroes. We have this brave ape that is forced by the decimation of forests to come out of the trees and live on the African plains. No longer able to feed himself from the fruits and nuts from trees, he begins to scavenge meat from the kills of lions and hyenas. So he, (it is always he, women are hardly mentioned in this theory), has to compete with the top predators and through bravery and ingenuity, he learn to become a top predator himself.

So what a wonderful heroic drama this is, worthy of any Hollywood film script. The fact there is hardly any evidence of this and it is all speculation, is beside the point. As any newspaper reporter will tell you; “you don’t let the facts get in the way of a good story”.

Not only is it a good story, it also seems to make sense of the brutal world we live in. It makes sense of the behaviour of atrocious dictators like Hitler and Stalin, and ‘great’ conquerors like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan and Napoleon. In other words, it justifies male violence, war, genocide and torture. The theory claims that man learned to be violent because he had to fight for survival against the top predators on the African savannah. In other words he became a killer ape. This is a depressing thought, because if that is the case, then violence, war and genocide will always be part of human behaviour.

Another great thing about this theory is that it puts man at the top of the food chain. (Men of course will always want to be the top; we wouldn’t want men to take second place to any other animal, would we?). The food chain starts off with plants, herbivores eat the plants and carnivores in turn eat them. This means carnivores are at the top of the food chain and if man wants to be top alongside carnivores he has to be a carnivore himself. The problem is that he is not a real carnivore. Human beings don’t have large claws, powerful jaws and large teeth with which they can kill other animals. It was only the invention of the spear that has made it possible for humans to do this.

Neither are human beings exclusive meat eaters, like cats. The diets of the vast majority of people in the world consist of vegetables and seeds. So I'm afraid we have to take second place to the real carnivores in the world, like cats, dogs and polar bears. The only people who can make this claim are the Eskimos who live near the Arctic Circle. It is impossible to grow crops on ice, which means the Inuit people can only live on raw meat. (It has to be raw, as it is also extremely difficult to light a fire on an ice floe). So at least the Eskimos can claim to be at the top of the food chain, but for the rest of us, well, I'm afraid we all have to accept second place as omnivores. And if you are a vegetarian you have to accept third place.

What is surprising about the savannah theory is just how inept it is. Scientists like to boast about how they will consider the evidence very carefully and not be swayed by emotion. Yet this is clearly not the case with the savannah theory. The savannah theorists claim that when our ape ancestor came out of the trees it found food in the marrow of bones left by scavengers. This it extracted by breaking open the bones with rocks. The idea sounds reasonable until you find out that hyenas, one of the main scavengers on the African plain, have jaws so powerful that they can easily break up bones with their teeth. Which means it is very unlikely that apes would find enough marrow to feed a reasonably sized population because there will be little left after hyenas have crunched up the bones.

It is true animal bones have been found alongside primitive tools and weapons of early humans. This has given the false impression that early humans had an exclusively meat diet. But we would only know about bones because they can be preserved in soil that is not too acid. Vegetable matter on the other hand rots away very quickly so there is no way to know how much vegetable or meat early humans ate. What we do know is that they ate a lot of shellfish, as large amounts of opened shells have been found in the excavations of early human settlements, near the coast. So we can say that many early humans did eat a lot of shellfish.

Another problem with man the mighty hunter, is that when anthropologists have observed hunter/gatherer tribes in Africa in modern times, what they find is that women gather far more food than men can hunt. In fact they found that hunting is a very unreliable means of gaining food, as the majority of attempts to kill animals with spears or bows and arrows end in failure. Hunting only became important when humans moved north into colder climates where plants didn't grow throughout the winter. It was then hunting became very important, as it was the only way to obtain food during the winter months. So the further north humans went, the more important hunting became, but this only happened after we became fully human.

Savannah theories also claim our ape ancestor became so clever because he had to figure out how to stalk and ambush game on the African plains. They also claim that this was how man developed speech, as men had to learn simple communications to organize ways to ambush animals. Yet we know lionesses also do this successfully; they stalk and ambush their prey, but they haven't needed to develop large brains or speech in order to do this.

Another problem with the savannah theory is that other primates have moved from living in trees to the plains, namely baboons and vervet monkeys. We find they didn't lose their hair, learn to stand upright, develop speech or became very brainy. The forest baboon is not a great deal different to those who live on the savannah. So looking at other primates, we find that living on the African plains, had far less effect on them than savannah theorists would like to think.

It is also claimed that our ape ancestors lost their hair to keep them cooler as they ran after game, and running on two legs make them better runners. This again is total nonsense. A cheetah runs far faster than a human, but it doesn't need to shed its fur to keep itself cool. Also, running on four legs is the main reason why cheetahs are so fast, because they are able to create an enormous stride using their whole body as well as their back and forelegs. Men are also more hairy than women, so if we follow through the logic that humans become hairless to keep themselves cool when running, it would suggest that it was women who were running after game. As for running on two legs, compared with most other animals on the Africa plains, man is a very slow runner. There is no advantage to running on two legs or we would see many other animals doing the same. The only large mammal that only uses two legs is the Kangaroo, but this animal leaps rather than runs. It is true the ostrich and emu can both run very fast on two legs but they have no choice because being birds, their front legs have been turned into wings.

The whole savannah theory is based on dubious speculation and if scientists were genuinely unbiased they would have rejected it long ago. So what of the alternative theory? What does the aquatic ape theory tell us about ourselves?

The first thing is that it gives a far better explanation of why we are naked, because this is what got scientists interested in this concept in the first place. The vast majority of animals that live on the African plains have fur. The exceptions are animals like elephants and hippos and the reason why these animals do not have fur is that they are semi-aquatic. (The elephant is a remarkably good swimmer, and its closest relation in the animal world, is the sea cow). Fur is not a very good insulator in the water unless the animal develops very dense fur with very large oil glands that can keep the water out, like you see with the otter and mink. For most marine animals the best insulation is fat, which covers the bodies of dolphins, whales, seals and penguins. This is what humans also have.

Humans have ten times as many fat cells under the skin as would be expected in a non-aquatic animal of the same size. It is true some mammals, which hibernate can also retain fat, but this fat is seasonal; aquatic mammals and humans retain fat throughout the year. Also humans don't hibernate, not even the Eskimos, who for thousands of years endured dark arctic winters living in Igloos. Human infants are especially fat compared to apes and most other fully terrestrial mammals. The human fatty layer is also attached to the skin of the central body parts, as is the case with most medium- or larger-sized semi-aquatic mammals, rather than to the muscle as in almost all land mammals. Humans also lack the layer of cutaneous muscle possessed by land mammals including non-human primates, which allows many land animals to twitch their skin, and which is not present in aquatic mammals.

Being naked is not a good idea in the hot African sun. (Even black people can get sun burnt, or can get skin cancer from too much sun). Fur protects the skin from the deadly effects of the sun and is also a far better insulator than fat for land animals. This is because a land animal can shed fur in the summer and grow it again in the winter. It can also fluff up fur in the heat, to allow the air to get to its skin to cool down. Or it can bring the hairs closer to the body, trapping the air in the fur to allow better insulation in the cold. Fur also makes it far easier for animals to adapt to very cold conditions. In the 19th century when the first zoos were created in Europe they attempted to house tropical animals in heated rooms, but the animals quickly died. So they tried leaving the tropical animals outside and they quickly adapted to the cold by growing thicker fur. It was found that even Russian zoos have no problems in caging tropical animals out in the open, as their fur grows thickly enough to adapt to the Russian weather.

Another problem with fat as an insulator is that it is heavier than fur. In the African Savannah, most animals survive by being fast runners, either to escape predators or being a predator itself, to catch prey. So an animal doesn't want to be weighed down by excess weight like fat. Fur gives far better insulation qualities with far less weight than fat. It seems the only advantage of the fat we have around our bodies is that fat is a better insulator in water and it gives us buoyancy when floating.

There is also the problem about how humans became so brainy. It is of interest that the biggest brains on the planet belong to aquatic or semi-aquatic animals. For instance, dolphins have bigger brains than humans, while a killer whale has a brain five times the size of humans and the sperm whale has a brain six times bigger than us. On land, the only animal that has a brain larger than humans is the elephant, which has a brain twice our size. So why is it that marine animals have on average, larger brains than those on land?

It seems this has to do with fat and trace elements. Sixty percent of the brain is fat, and the food needed to create large brains is omega-3 fatty acids and iodine. Without this vital brain food it is impossible for the body to grow a large brain. The marine environment has an abundance of these vital nutrients but they are in short supply on land. Iodine is a trace element that is vital for brain development, but there are many parts of the world where it is not present in the soil, like North America, Russian, Australia and parts of Africa. Iodine not being present in a mother's body when she is pregnant is a major cause of mental deficiency in babies. Both WHO and UNICEF see this as a major worldwide health problem and both organizations have encouraged countries to produce iodized salt that is sold to the public. Iodine is abundant in seawater and therefore the food richest in iodine is found in seafood.

So let's compare a dolphin with a zebra, which has the same body weight. A zebra has 360 grams of brain while the dolphin has 1.8 kilograms. In other words, a dolphin has a brain about five times the size of that of a zebra. This is also true with apes. Human beings have a body size comparable with chimpanzees and gorillas, the chimpanzee being slightly smaller and the gorilla slightly larger. Yet humans on average have brains over three times bigger than both ape species.

The savannah theory claims that men could obtain the vital DHA fat from bone marrow. Yet hyenas, which have powerful jaws to crunch up bone and eat the bone marrow of the animals they kill and scavenge, do not have large brains like us. Also the savannah is not rich in the vital trace element iodine, which is vital for brain development.

This then makes sense of a puzzle about early humans. We would expect that as humans evolve more, our brains would get bigger and bigger, but this hasn't happened. Neanderthal humans had brains larger than the average human today; this is also true of the Cro Magnon humans who had a brain 15 percent larger than modern day people.

So why did this happen? An obvious explanation would be that many humans rejected the sea and moved back inland. This would mean they wouldn't find the same abundance of brain food as on the coast, resulting in their brains becoming increasingly smaller. It is of interest that the size of human brains can vary enormously, some humans having brains as low as 800 cc or as high as 2,000 cc. This big variation could be to do with the different diets humans have and how much brain food they consume. It has to be said, however, that brain size is not a very good indication of individual intelligence.

Throughout the 20th century there has been a controversy about Boskop "Man". This is suppose to be a different species of man with a brain 30% larger than the average man today. Frederick FitzSimons discovered the first Boskop skull in 1913; many related subsequent skulls were discovered by other prominent palaeontologists of the time, including Robert Broom, Alexander Galloway, William Pycraft, Sidney Haughton, Raymond Dart and others. The skulls were dated between 10,000 to 30,000 years ago.

They were mostly found on the coast, some were found on the beach, along with shell middens. So it was also claimed they were Strandlopers. (I have mentioned these people in Chapter Two). In the 1950s the evidence for Boskop "Man" was reviewed and it concluded that these skull were not of a separate species but simply large brain individuals of ordinary people. But the controversy won't go away because recently two neuroscientists wrote the book *Big Brain: The Origins and Future of Human Intelligence*. by Gary Lynch and Richard Granger. That supports the idea of Boskop "Man" is a separate species.

The controversially over this could be settled through the aquatic ape theory. If we accept that people living on the coast eating marine food rich in iodine and omega-3 fatty acids will continue to develop larger brains while the brains of people who live inland will decrease as they are starved of vital brain food.

Unfortunately larger brain size didn't ensure that the coastal people would survive. As this book shows the inland people seems to have become more aggressive and violent than the coastal people and most coastal communities of mermaid people were wiped out by the more violent inland people.

There is a real mystery why human beings are the only animals to walk upright. As previously mentioned, running upright makes human beings slow runners. A four-legged animal has a far longer stride, using both the back and front legs. Also we pay a price for our upright stature through knee and back problems as well as varicose veins, hemorrhoids and hernias.

Yet the big advantage is that being bipedal leaves human beings hands free to carry objects and use tools. It is doubtful we evolved bipedalism for this reason; chimpanzees also use tools but chimps are still happy to walk around on four legs, and only use tools squatting on the ground. The great hunter theory claims that man walked on two legs to see above the high African grass on the savannah. The problem with this theory is that you also have large numbers of grazing animals eating this grass. So these conditions don't last for very long and would only be a temporary situation every year. Another great hunter theory is that standing upright means that less of the body's area is exposed to the midday sun. And to be fair, Australian aboriginals do this when caught out in the open in the midday sun. They stand perfectly still until the sun moves closer to the horizon, but where they can, they prefer to shelter under trees and bushes. This is probably what early human also done.

In the past, there was another ape, which was bipedal like us. This was the long-extinct Oreopithecus, known as the swamp ape. Scientists have found it had a pelvis like ours, making it suitable for bipedalism. In modern times the two primates that are able to walk upright are the proboscis monkey and the bonobo ape. The proboscis lives in the mangrove swamps of Borneo and is a real swimming primate as some have been found swimming in the sea by fishermen. The bonobo lives in forests that are seasonally flooded every year. Both species wade through the water in a similar way to human beings, so this suggests that bipedalism in primates comes from living in flooded or swampy areas.

The Aquatic Ape Theory

The aquatic ape theory suggests like the great hunter theory, that our ape ancestors were forced to come out of the trees because of changing climatic conditions, but instead of living on the savannah these apes found they could survive by gathering shellfish and seaweed on the seashore. The result would be that they became a wading ape, as the ape could walk in deeper water by walking upright. The advantage of living in trees is that it is a good protection against predators, most of whom can't climb trees. The same protection can be given to an upright wading ape simply because it can wade out to deeper water than a four legged predator. It is true that the predator might swim, but it loses all its advantages of speed, size and power swimming in the water. To this ape, the water will become a safe haven in much the same way a tree is, so instead of climbing a tree to escape from a predator it can run into the ocean instead. In fact a beach is a difficult hunting ground for predators as there is not much cover a large cat can hide behind to stalk its prey. This then would make shell hunting more popular among females if they are pregnant or breast-feeding a child, as the water protects them. This could explain another scientific mystery.

Most animals reach full maturity within a few years; this is because the young of most species are very vulnerable to attacks from predators. So the quicker they grow to full size the better chance they have of survival. But the human child can take up to 20 years to reach full maturity, and it is totally helpless in the first two years of its life. Now having a long time to mature is an advantage for human brain development, but for early humans to evolve to this means mothers had to be able to keep their children in a safe environment away from predators. Living on the savannah alongside lions and hyenas would not be a very safe environment for the young of early humans. Monkeys and most apes are able to keep reasonably safe by living in trees, though there is also the danger of infant primates falling. So it means that the ocean would be a safer environment for early humans than even trees. It is true that there are sharks in the sea but sharks would be far less of a threat than big cats or hyenas on land. All over the world, sharks kill only a handful of people every year, in spite of the large numbers of people who swim in the ocean. Statistically, a person has a better chance of being hit by lightning than being attacked by a shark.

So there are a lot of advantages to female apes becoming marine food gatherers. It's not so true for male apes, who would be bigger and stronger anyway and don't have the burden of trying to save a helpless baby from a predator as well. So it would cause a division of labour, men gathering on land while women gathered in the sea.

This is why the Aquatic Ape theory seems to have a great appeal to women, and why many male scientists don't like it. Instead of having a great white hunter, coming home from a hard day of hunting to be greeted by his adoring wife, we now have women who are more than able to feed themselves and their children without any help from men. Well, we can't

Film still of underwater Ama divers from Japanese Web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

possibly have that, can we? More so if you realize that it is claimed by Elaine Morgan that it took a 6 million years for humans to evolve into a semi-aquatic animal. So in that entire time, women were capable of looking after themselves without the need of man the mighty hunter.

Other human characteristics that support the Aquatic Ape theory are that we sweat salt and water from our skin glands. For a land animal this is a waste, more so in a hot country like Africa, as water is very scarce at certain times of the years. So sweating water is a very inefficient method of keeping cool for a tropical animal. This is exacerbated in a human because it is naked, so when a human sweats it quickly evaporated by the sun. A fur covering means that moisture is shaded and evaporates more slowly. Salt is also scarce for land animals, who will travel a long way to find salt licks. Yet sweating salt makes a lot of sense to aquatic animals that need a way to get rid of an excess of salt in their bodies because they are living in a salty environment.

There are a lot of other arguments that have been put forward by Elaine Morgan, like the fact that human legs are very similar in shape and mechanical function to those of a frog i.e. both are adapted for swimming. Some mothers today have births where the mother gives birth in a tub of water. Apparently birth like this is a lot easier for mothers, suggesting that at one time in our evolution this was commonplace. Also it has been found that newborn babies can float and swim straight away after birth. Other apes, like a newborn chimpanzee or gorilla, will quickly sink and drown, if not rescued. Water births are not just some new-age fad. As mentioned before, there is a tribe in Indonesian called the Suku laut, or the "Sea People", who live a semi-aquatic existence. The sea people spend up to 10 hours every day in the

Picture of a sea gypsy's boat, (above) and woman gathering shellfish from a beach, (below). from Shan Yoma Travel & Tours Co.Ltd. web-site.
http://www.exploremyanmar.com/

water, they give birth in the water, the children dive before they walk and the people harvest all their food from the sea.

It seems that for an ape that can use its hands to pick up things from the ground and wade through water, shellfish and edible seaweed would be a very easy way to obtain food. Unfortunately if too many apes take advantage of this, the shallows will quickly become over fished, forcing them either to move further along the coast, or to start to dive under water further out. Clearly at first they would just quickly duck their heads under the water, to collect shellfish deeper than an arm's length. Then in time, becoming specialist feeders, their bodies would adapt to going further and further out to sea.

So you can see there is a very strong arguments for the Aquatic Ape theory. Yet most male scientists still resist this theory. To quote the Anthropologist Prof. Leslie Aiello. -

Until there is actual evidence to support a serious aquatic involvement, I don't think that we're going to be able to say that that's at all a contender for a theory for human evolution.

There is no actual evidence for the man the hunter theory, but this hasn't stopped scientists presenting it to the public as fact. In recent times they are backtracking and accept that early humans might have scavenged for food instead of hunting. There is even an acceptance nowadays, that the mighty hunter might be black! Back in the 1950s and 1960s it was commonplace in textbooks for school children, to draw pictures of early humans on the African plains as white people!

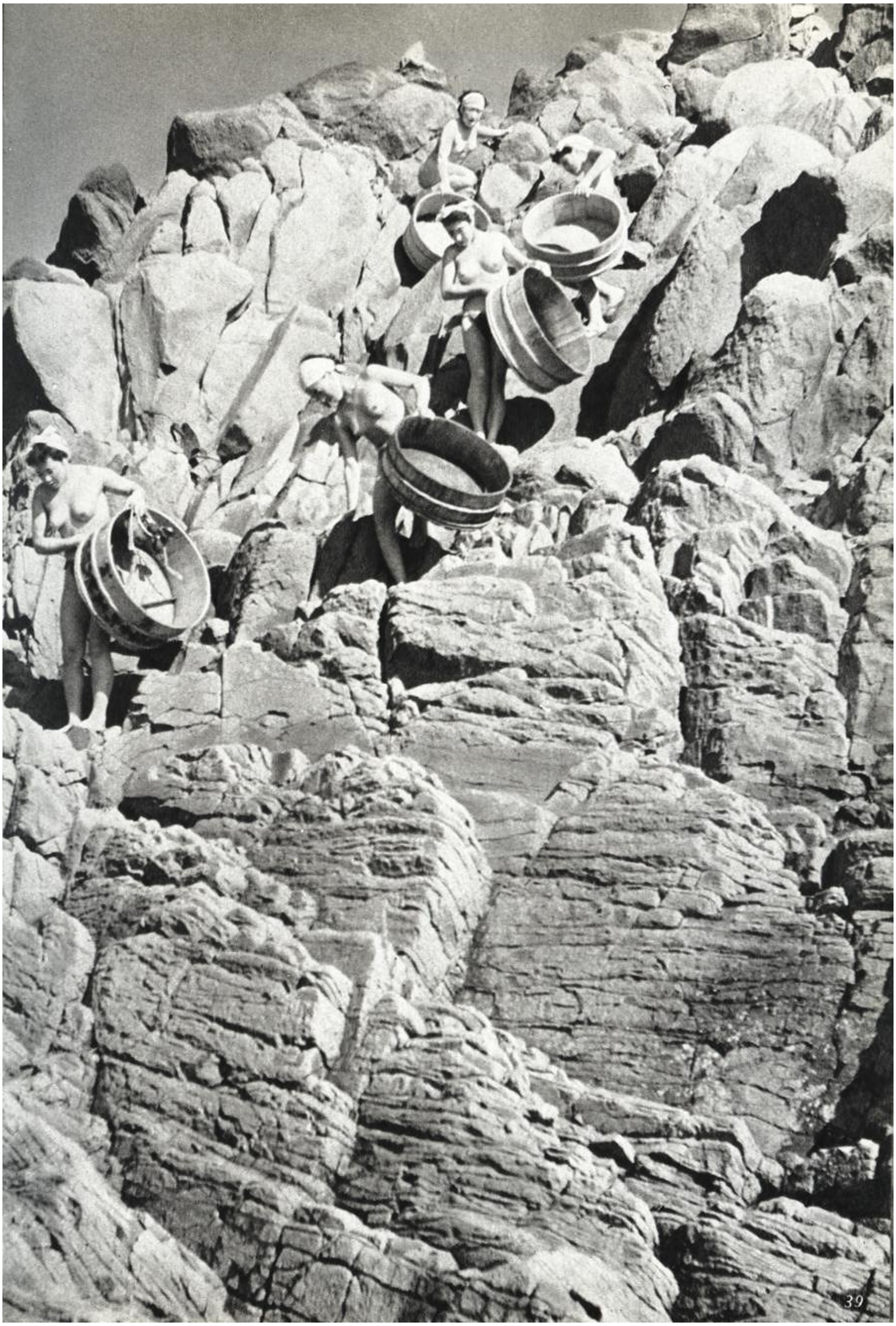
Elaine Morgan now has the confidence to declare that the Man The Hunter theory is defunct. Yet she is clearly puzzled that with all the weight of evidence she can present for her theory, it is still not widely accepted in the scientific community, as we can see from the quotes from two other scientists.

It is difficult to see how all the points assembled to back the Aquatic Theory can be explained away. - Dr. Desmond Morris, author of 'The Naked Ape'

The aquatic hypothesis... cannot be eliminated yet. - Prof. Glyn Isaac

Now this begs the question: Why does this theory need to be explained away or eliminated? Or, for that matter, why is the Aquatic Ape theory very popular among feminists but extremely unpopular among male scientists? Is it because of a very strong gender bias in comparing the Man The Hunter theory with the Aquatic Ape theory?

The savannah theory has run into a few problems, one of them being that fossils of early humans are not found on a dry savannah, but in ancient woodlands near rivers and lakes. So there is no evidence for the savannah theory. For this reason it has been changed to the mosaic theory where a large variety of different environments led to human evolution. This grudgingly admits that perhaps a water environment was part of human



Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island*. Amas having to climb down a cliff face to the sea, before they start their work diving.

evolution but it also suggests that the savannah had something to do with it as well. In this new mosaic theory, the killer ape hypotheses is still an integral part of it, and still suggests that hunting played a vital part of man's evolution.

There has been criticism of the Aquatic Ape theory. For instance it is claimed now that humans could have become naked because they began to wear clothing and keep warm at nights by lighting fires. This is a bit of a chicken and egg argument, about which came first. Animals with fur respond to colder conditions by growing thicker fur, so if humans still retained fur, would they have needed to wear clothing? Also, most human in the tropical Africa where humans first evolved, didn't wear much clothing anyway, until the 20th century.

The critics also point out that other apes are nearly bipedal. chimpanzees, bonobos, gibbons and orang-utans have been observed walking on two feet. The trouble is that except for bonobos, all these apes have arms longer than their legs. Human beings on the other hand have long legs and small arms. In the savannah, a slow moving ape would need long powerful arms to protect it from predators, because it would be very unlikely to be able to outrun them. Even with the help of clubs, a chimpanzee- like ancestor using clubs would still need all its strength to fight off lionesses or hyenas. Gorillas are mostly a ground -dwelling ape and can survive on the ground because their size and long powerful arms make them a formidable opponent for any predator to take on. The baboon, another ground dwelling primate, has developed long canine teeth with which it can threaten predators. Gorillas and chimpanzees throw out their arms widely when threatening carnivores, making themselves look bigger and showing the threat of their long powerful arms. So long powerful arms would still be a big advantage to any killer ape, and there would be no reason to evolve the puny weak arms humans have today.

Even when early Humans began to use spears, a long powerful arm would still be a big advantage. Australian Aboriginals developed the woomera, which is a spear-throwing device that hooks on the end of the spear and extends the length of the thrower's arm, so he can throw the spear faster and further. Human beings also had to invent the bow and arrow to kill game at a longer range. Yet even this wasn't enough and today a really effective hunter uses a rifle. These inventions wouldn't be so important if humans had the long powerful arms of a chimpanzee. So if we had evolved through being hunter/killer apes we would still have the long powerful arms of an ape, because they would be such a big advantage for hunters. This suggests that humans didn't evolve through hunting, but through gathering, where strength and a long reach, is no longer an important aspect of survival. As we see with Kangaroos, their front paws have become small and weak because they are hardly used. The same is true of humans. Admittedly we do use our arms and hands to manipulate the environment around us, but their size and strength are no longer a factor in our survival.

Another point that is made is that other animals like dogs are able to swim as well as humans and are even able to hold their breath underwater. Yes, it is true most animals are good swimmers; they need to be, if they are to cross-rivers and to survive floods. But only marine or semi marine animals are capable of diving underwater. No one has ever observed a dog, cat or ape diving underwater, which humans can do.

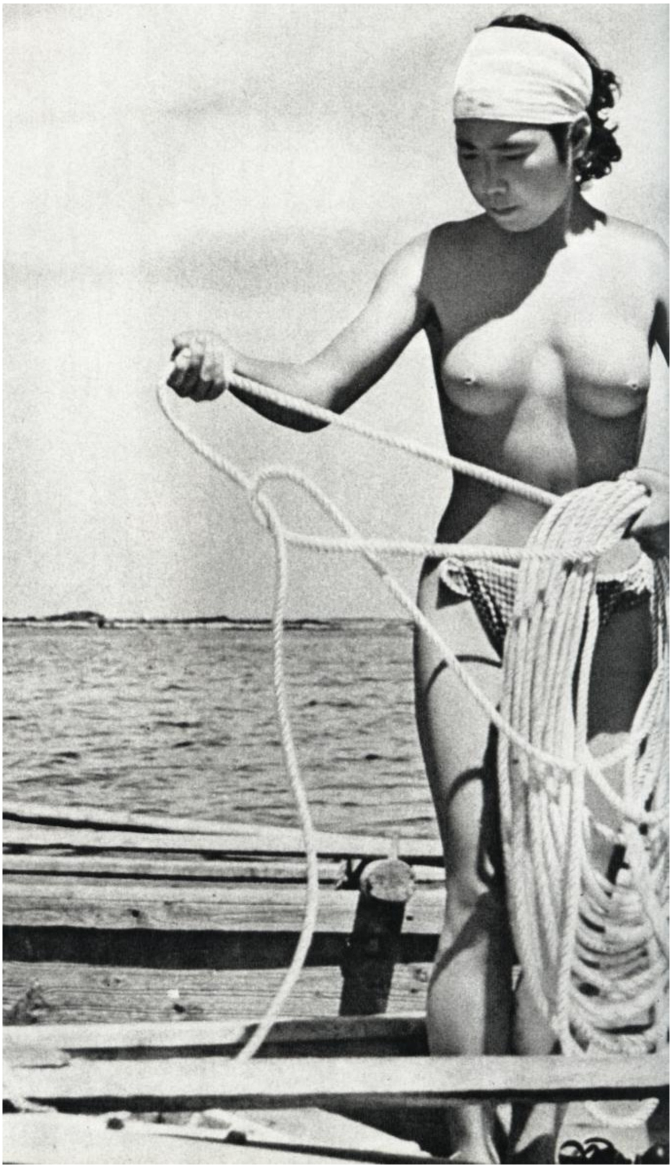
It's also pointed out that all animals can become fat if they are not exercised and overeat. True, but overweight land animals are very unlikely to survive in the wild. It is only domestic animals that get overweight. The only fat animals in the wild are marine animals. There is simply no advantage for a land animal in carrying excess fat, which women have on their chests, bottoms and thighs. It is true that a fit man carries less fat than a woman but we cannot leave women out of any evolutionary theory, in the way man the hunter theorists have done. It is also claimed that large female breasts and bottom are not very streamlined in the water. This would be a consideration if humans were fully aquatic. In sport men can outperform women because of their great strength, but in long distance swimming women can match or even outperform men. This is because the fat around women makes them more buoyant; they float better than men, so when swimming, more of the woman's body is out of the water. Women need marginally less effort to propel themselves along in the water than men, so the fat around women's chest and bottom does benefit them when swimming.

Desmond Morris claimed in his book, *The Naked Ape* that women developed breasts because it made them sexually attractive to men. So the larger the breasts the more likely she would breed. The problem with this theory is that it assumes that men were the dominant sex during the Stone Age and so it was men who chose their sexual partners. But this may not be true; we cannot assume that early man was a brute who dominated women through violence and rape.

Critics have also claimed there is no big advantage to water births, but that is a matter of opinion. Water births are normal among the sea gypsies of South East Asia, but as far as I know no one has done any studies of this.

Another point is that humans cannot drink saltwater which marine animals can do. This is what we are told, but humans have a greater tolerance of drinking saltwater than is generally believed. I will discuss this later on in this book

It also has been pointed out that humans have to be taught to swim, either as children or adults, which means swimming doesn't come naturally to humans. Human beings also have to learn how to walk and talk as well. The first instinct for babies is to crawl and they have to learn how to walk on two legs. There is a lot of human behaviour that is not instinctive. The more intelligent an animal is the less it relies on pure instinct, and this is certainly



Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island*. An ama on boat untangling a rope before she ties it around her waist to dive in the sea.

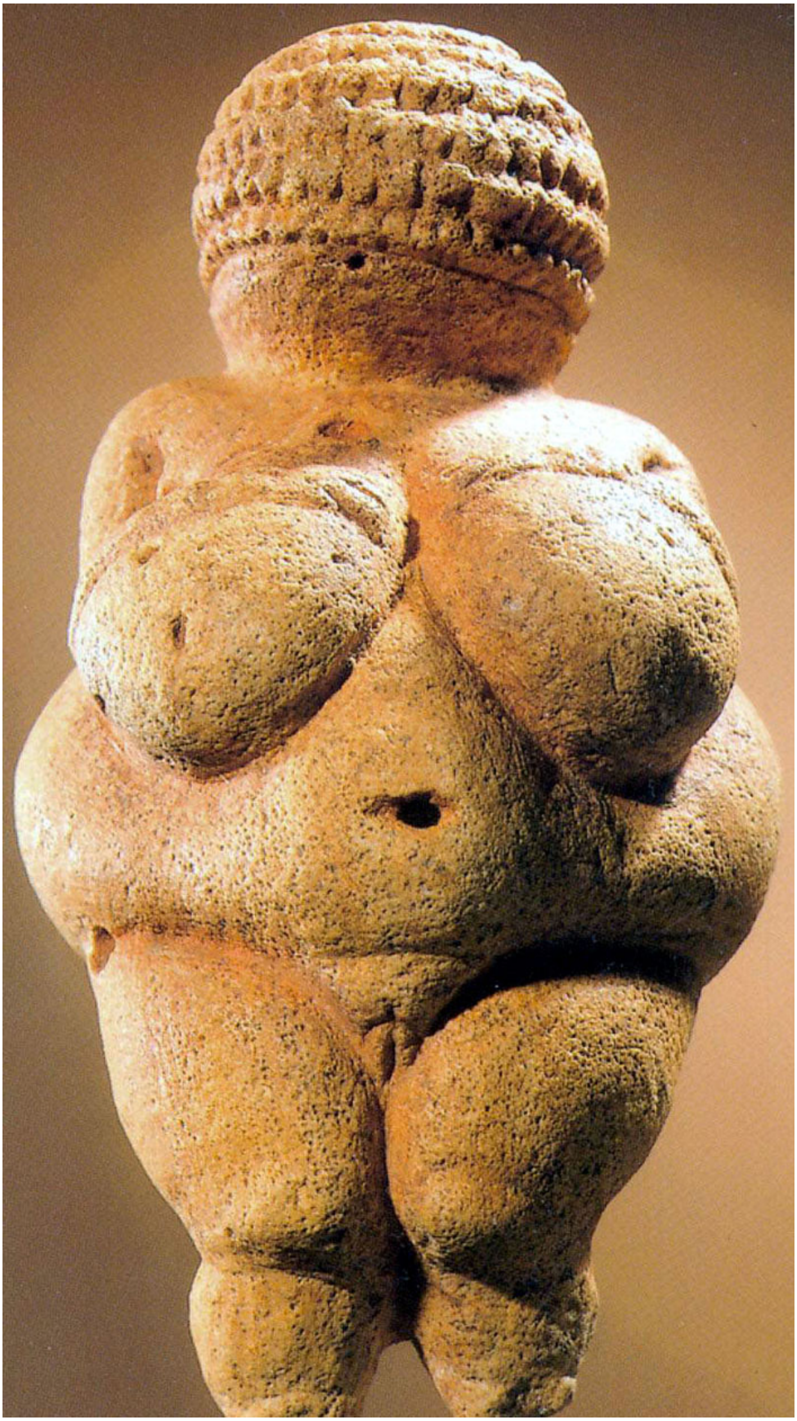
the case with humans. In the case of the sea-people of South-East Asia, their children learn to swim before they can walk, so it does depend on what environment a person is brought up in. Another point they make, is that there are a lot of features about humans that are not aquatic, like, large ears, long limbs, broad round shoulders, and a current lack of aquatic behaviour in modern humans. The Aquatic Ape theory doesn’t claim that; humans are fully aquatic, so yes, we would have features that are compatible with both land and sea animals.

Dissenters also point out that aquatic animals like otters, beavers and polar bears are aquatic but still retain their fur. Otters and beavers are small animals and a layer of fat to keep them warm in the water would make them too heavy to run about on land. This is true of the polar bear; this bear lives in a very cold climate and the fat needed to keep a bear warm without fur would again make it too heavy to catch prey. If compared with a seal or walrus the extra weight of fat around their bodies gives these animals big disadvantage on land when encountering a bear. Along with the fact they don't have legs. Even though seals only have flippers, a lighter body weight would still help them get to the sea faster to evade capture by a polar bear.

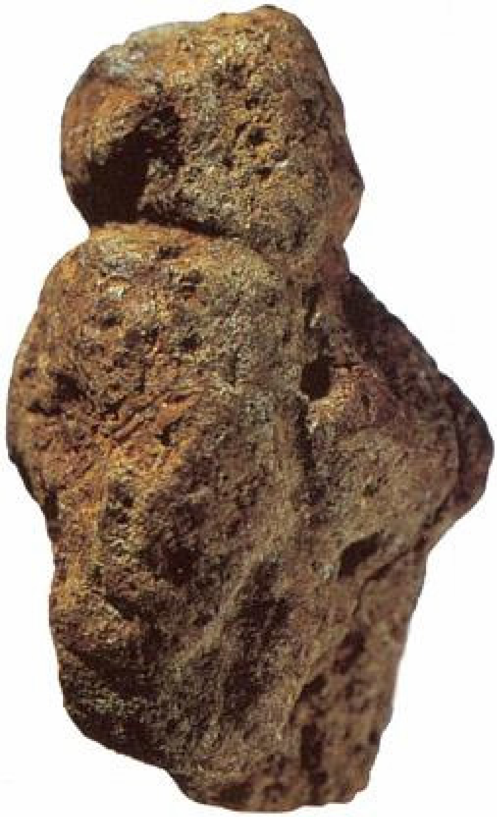
Apart from the fact that the Aquatic Ape theory doesn't in any way support the ideal of man the mighty hunter, another big problem with this theory is that women are more adaptable to water than men, because women have less body hair than men, and have more body fat. So what is the problem with that? The trouble is that when we look at modern day communities that still dive for shellfish we find that women have a distinct advantage. As mentioned in previous chapters, women have a big advantage over men when people live off the sea by gathering underwater. This would suggest that humans lived a life similar to the ama and haenyo communities for millions of years.

Large deposits of shellfish shells have been found in South Africa in early hominid sites, proving that early humans were eating shellfish. Also very early hominids like Homo erectus had very thick tooth enamel and powerful jaws. It is speculated that they were needed to break open nuts and shellfish with their teeth. Later on they would have used stones or clubs to do this, which may have been the first use of tools for hominids. Another controversial point is that the oldest carvings by humans ever discovered are of overweight women.

The most famous is the Venus of Willendorf, which was found in Germany and is estimated to be 20,000 to 30,000 years old. Now the big problem with this carved figure is that she is obviously obese. This goes against every theory developed about Stone Age people, which assume that they were hunter/gatherers. We would assume that a hunter-gather tribe would be always on the move, following game and looking for seasonal fruits. An overweight person simply couldn't do this as these people will be walking all the time. We also wouldn't assume that people in the Stone-age before farming, would be so well fed. This nomadic lifestyle would be very unlikely for an obese woman, so who was she and what role did she play within the tribe? One statue can be dismissed and an anomaly, but many statues of overweight women have been discovered in Stone-age excavations. But paleontologists make no attempt to explain these statues, except to dismiss them as fertility figures or Stone Age pornography.



Venus of Willendorf between 20,000 to 30,000 years old



233,000 or 800,00 year old female carving

The oldest known figurine of a human being is female and was found in Israel, and is somewhere between 233 000 and 800,000 years old, and may be a Homo erectus woman. Now the only thing we know about Homo erectus is their bones, we have no idea what they looked like in the flesh. This statue suggests that Homo erectus women looked very much like modern women with fleshy breasts and subcutaneous fat covering her body. Suggesting that Homo erectus people were as aquatic as modern people. Many other fat ladies have also been found right up to the Neolithic age. The only sensible explanation for these fat ladies is the Aquatic Ape theory, which points to a completely different picture of Stone-Age life.

Instead of following a hunter/gatherer existence, these obese women were probably divers, and the reason why carvings were made of them, was they were highly revered in their tribes, suggesting they were important breadwinners. In the colder waters of Europe, a fat woman would be able to withstand the cold water better than thinner women. So these women would be able to work longer in the water and would be the most productive women in the tribe. What this suggests is that at one time the whole of the human race was leading a life similar to ama and haenyo communities.

In the West today we see very slim or even skinny women as being beautiful. This wasn't the case in the past, and even today fat women are seen as very beautiful in Arab countries. It is reasoned that fat was seen as a sign of prosperity, but there could be another explanation for this. As mentioned before fat women make good divers or gatherers in cold water. So in the eyes of Stone Age sea people, they would be seen as very desirable, beautiful and successful breadwinners, giving them high status in their tribes.

More examples of "Fat Ladies" found in Stone-Age excavations, We can see clearly that women with very large breasts were not unknown in pre-historic times.

It is true that modern ama and haenyo divers are not greatly overweight, but this is because of many generations of adaptation to the cold. One of the mysteries of modern people coming out of Africa was that they reached Australia long before they moved up North to Europe, which is a lot closer. An obvious reason why this happened was because Europe was much colder than Africa. So because humans evolved in a warm continent their bodies wouldn't be adapted to living in cold weather or gathering in cold water. Yet there would be one good reason to do this and that is because there would be more food in European waters.

Tropical seas are crystal clear simply because there is very little microscopic life in them, whereas colder water is full of microscopic life like plankton. The reason for this is that cold water can retain for more oxygen than warmer waters, because more oxygen will start to evaporate out of the water, the warmer it becomes. So far more plankton can grow in the oxygen rich cold waters, which in turn feeds all other species of life living in these waters. This will mean that women gathering food from the shallows will find more food in the water, the further North they went. Naturally slim women would be put off by the colder water from doing this, and would prefer to stay where they are. Whereas naturally fatter women would have less problems with the cold, and become more interested in the increasing amount of food they can gather, which in turn will probably make them even more fatter. This means that the first humans to settle in Europe were probably fat people as we can see with the 'fat ladies' carvings.

Then in time these new Europeans will evolve other ways to withstand the cold water, like increasing their metabolic rate, this will then allow their bodies to burn more fuel to heat their bodies, allowing them to lose weight. Other adaptations will be having shorter legs and arms as long limbs lose more heat than shorter ones do. Shorter limbs would be a problem for hunters running after game, but not a problem for people gathering in seas, rivers and swamps.

One problem with people living in swamps is the belief that swamps are unhealthy. For instance malaria is associated with swampy conditions and is one of the reasons why many swamps in Europe were drained. Mussolini in the 1930s drained the swamps near Rome to prevent the spread of malaria. While in Britain the fens in Norfolk were also drained in the 19th century, partly for the same reason, that malaria had once spread as far North as England.

For this reason it could be assumed that swamp people would be living in very unhealthy conditions but this assumption is not true. As pointed out before in mermaid stories it seems that many were also herbalists, and there is good reason to now believe that these mermaid people had the herbal knowledge to cure malaria.

In the late 1960s Chairman Mao rejected Western medicine, and Chinese scientist looking for a way to protect the Chinese army against malaria was forced to look for a solution in ancient Chinese herbal remedies. The work was done by a woman called Dr Ying Li who tried many herbs including Aremesia, (In the west it is called Sweet Woodworm). The results were dramatic when Aremesia was tested as it killed malaria parasites even faster than Western drugs. So the herb as quickly adopted in Communist China. Then the West became interested as the malaria parasites were now becoming resistant to quinine-based drugs. Unfortunately the first meetings between Chinese and Western doctors didn't go too well. Dr Ying Li claimed that the Western doctors were 'arrogant and contemptuous', they clearly had problems with the fact a cure for malaria came from Chinese herbal medicine and that a woman discovered this. They also couldn't work out how this herb worked as it was completely unlike any other anti-malaria drug or herb. The Chinese also were suspicious of the Western doctor's motives, as in the meeting, as some of them were military doctors. It seems to the Chinese that they would be giving away a military advantage, if China and the West come into conflict, in malaria infected countries. The result was that the Chinese refused to share their knowledge with the West. With the effectiveness of quinine declining the West, a cure for malaria was urgently needed and the USA military was willing to put money and recourses into replicating the Chinese research. Aremesia was only grown in China so the USA military had to find a plant similar to this herb outside of China. They searched all over the world but finally discovered it growing along the Potomac River in Washington not far from the Pentagon! They also found this herb growing wild in people's gardens. Research on this herb revealed a better understanding how it cured malaria, which is making it more acceptable to Western medicine.

Although Aremesia or Sweet Woodworm is new to Western medicine it's use can be traced back thousands of years in Chinese herbal medicine. Which means that ancient herbalists had cures for diseases modern medicine could not cure until recently.

With the coming of farming the ancient hunter/gather way of life was lost in Europe and with it was a lot of knowledge of herbs. This was because when people began to farm the diet of human beings became restricted to the few varieties plants that farmers could grow. Whereas before this, the ancient gathers would have knowledge of a vast range of plants they could gather and process. It has been shown that many diseases can appear through the restriction in diet, this is because for millions of years the human body has been used to what is now called, "the stone age diet". The types of food we ate as hunter/gathers is very different to what we eat after we began to rely on farming.

Though today there is a difference of opinion exactly what is a Stone Age diet. Some people imagine it would be a diet of Mammoth steaks. Yet from what we know of Stone Age people who have survived until modern times it seems that the vast majority of their food comes from gathering plants, or gathering shellfish and seaweed as in the case of the sea-people of South East Asia. The exception to this would be the Inuit people who live in cold regions where gathering plants is impossible.

The mermaid people would of continued to eat the Stone Age diet gathering and diving for food on the seashore, in rivers and in freshwater and saltwater swamps. So the result would be that they would be healthier as their diet would be far more varied than people who depended on farming.

This is because the farmed food lacked vital nutrients needed to keep them in optimum health. The farming people would also have far less knowledge of herbs than the mermaid people to cure any illness. This then makes sense of why mermaids were also skilled herbalists, because they were still living a hunter/gather lifestyle and had a vast knowledge of editable plants.

The "fat Ladies" of Stone-Age sites can only make sense in communities, were gathering shellfish and seaweed in the sea, while the men were looking after the children on shore. Now this is could be a strong possibility; women could look after a child while gathering in the shallows, but if because of over fishing, they were forced to go out deeper, then they would have to leave children on the shore. Men being bigger and stronger than women would then be better protectors for these children than women. They would have the power and strength to pick up even older children and run with them into the water if approached by a predator.

Many people would have a big problem with this theory, because they would question whether an early human mother would trust a male to look after her children. Do males have the maternal instincts and sense of responsibility to care for children? If we accept the killer ape thesis, then clearly this wouldn't happen. An early human mother leaving her children with a male will be more likely to find he had eaten them when she came back. This is the sort of behaviour you find with male bears and lions who have been observed killing and eating their young. Yet we have to accept humans are not and never have been carnivores. The only true carnivorous humans are Eskimos living on the polar icecap. Most of everything you read about early humans suggests they were savage and brutal people, but what is not explained, is that this is pure speculation. Yet these theories are presented to the public as scientific fact.

Everything we have been taught at school and what we read in academic books suggests that men have always been the dominant sex. Steven Goldberg put forward a powerful argument for this in his book, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*. His reasoning largely focused on hormones. Men naturally have more testosterone than women. This hormone not only makes men physically stronger than women, it also makes them more aggressive and competitive. This competitive behaviour Goldberg says, will always make men strive harder than most women to gain the high-status roles in any society. He claims this means that men will always outnumber women in most positions of power in our world. To be fair, this is the situation in our world today, and has always been the case throughout recorded history.

What we are not told is that the whole academic world is powerfully influenced by male bias. This bias is not only extended to mermaids, female divers and the Aquatic Ape theory, it is present in the whole of paleontology, archaeology and history. If we take away this male bias then we find that the true nature of human beings is very different to what we imagine. By looking at the bonobo ape (which along with the chimpanzee is human kind's nearest relation,) we can get an understanding of the nature of early humans.

Update on the aquatic ape theory.

Recently I read in a book that claimed that these zero-size models were growing fur. I mentioned it in the Yahoo Group AAT , and Elaine Morgan wrote in that his could be important if it could be proven. Then someone else called John wrote in and said that this also happened to girls with anorexia. I looked this up on the internet and found it was a medical condition known as Lunigo. To quote the web-site. -

http://www.eatingdisorderexpert.co.uk/LanugoAndEatingDisorders.html

Lanugo or the growing of fine white hairs all over the body, is a phenomenon almost exclusively related to anorexia.

What Is Lanugo?

Lanugo is the formal name for soft, downy, fine white hair that grows mainly on the arms and chests of female anorexics. Lanugo will not grow on all anorexics, but it is usually found on anorexics who have suffered from severe weight loss and are approaching emaciation.

Why Does Lanugo Develop?

The growth of lanugo is one of the body's ways of insulating itself. When an anorexic loses too much weight and no longer has enough body fat to help heat herself, the body takes over and grows lanugo. These hairs grow in thickly and attempt to trap heat that is lost from the body before it dissipates. Lanugo is almost like a blanket that the body grows itself.

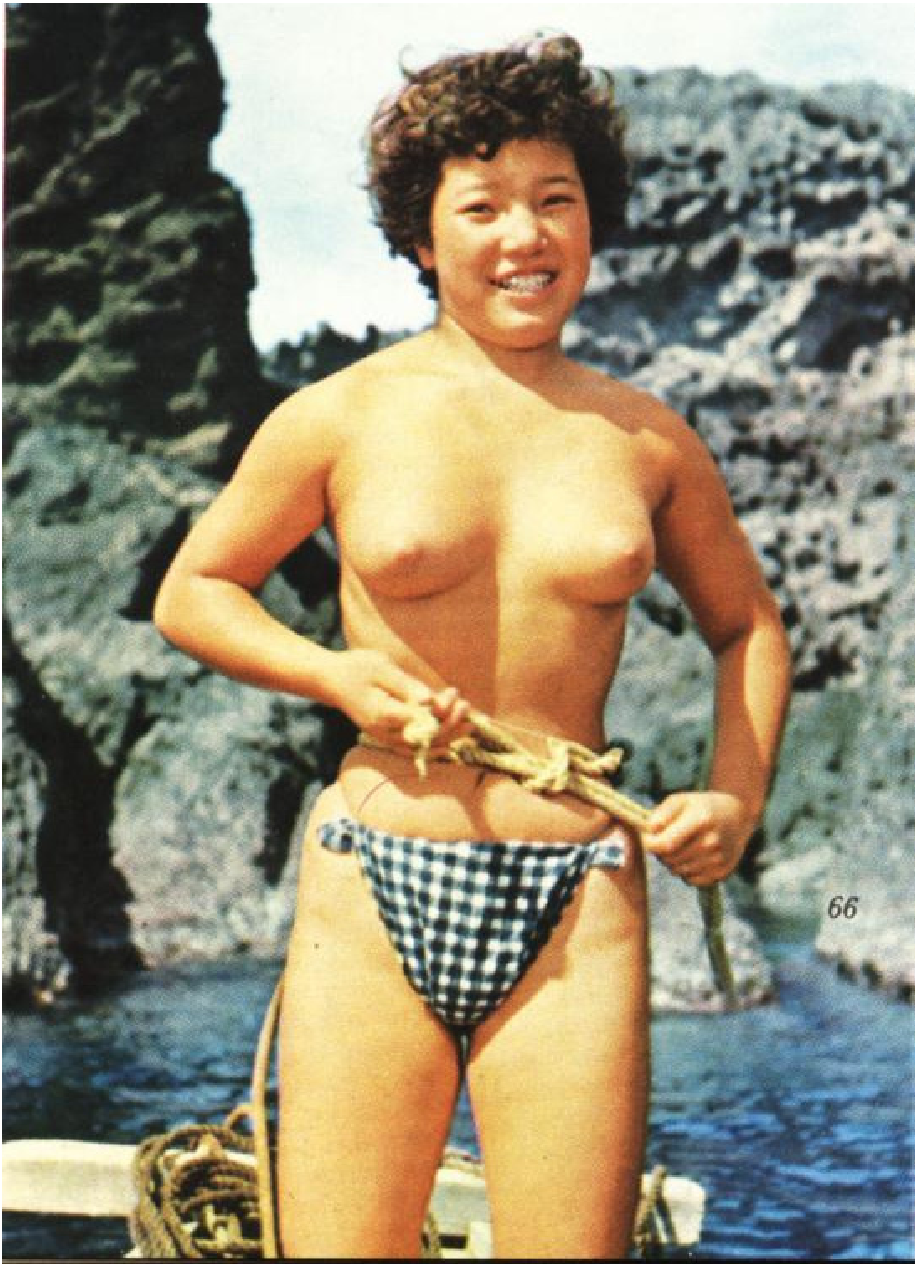
Is Lanugo Normal?

Lanugo grows on almost all infants in the womb, and it is not uncommon for babies to be born with lanugo still covering their bodies. However, most lanugo is typically shed just a few weeks past birth. Lanugo is not common or "normal" in healthy adults and instead is considered a tell-tale sign of anorexia.

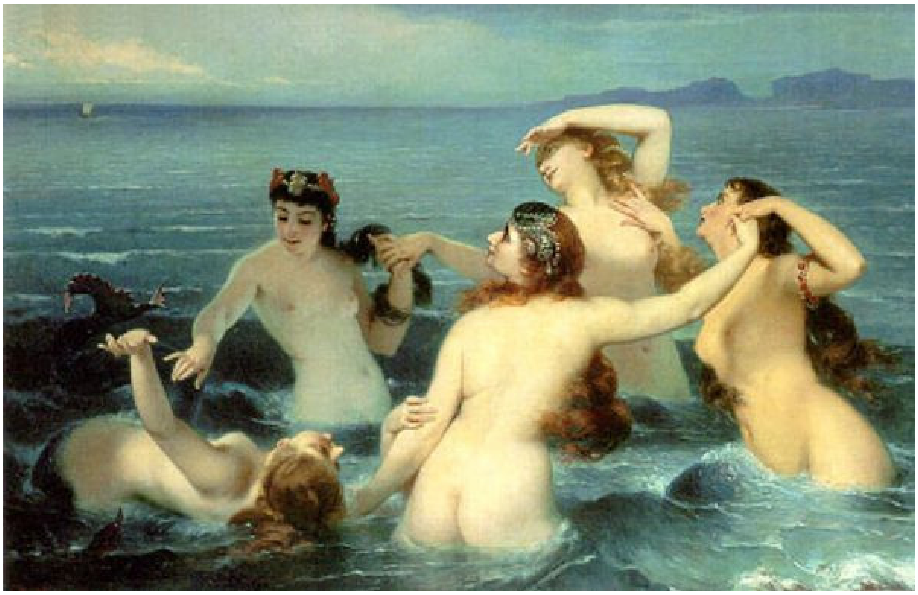
Where Exactly Does Lanugo Grow?

Lanugo often grows where no hair is normally present on females, including the chest, back, arms, neck and face. Often the lanugo is so soft and feathery that it might be referred to as "fuzz", "peachfuzz" or even "fur". Though an anorexic's feet and hands are often very cold due to poor circulation, lanugo rarely grows in these areas.

What this means is that if human beings didn't have subcutaneous fat around their bodies they would grow fur like chimpanzees, gorillas and other primate species. Which is interesting, as it was the blubber around human beings that made marine scientists question whether human beings had an aquatic origin and got the whole Aquatic Ape Theory going. It means if human beings were a completely land animal then we would grow fur. It is only our aquatic evolution that makes us nearly hairless.



Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island.* Of an ama diver on a boat getting ready to dive. This is the picture Fosco Maraini used on the cover of his book *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island.* When it was published in America, the publisher used a different name for the book and a different picture on the cover. Having a topless woman on the cover of a book in the 1960s would of then been scandalous



"Sirenes" by: Charles Edward Boutibonne (1816-1897) again we find another artist who refuses to paint sirens or mermaids as either part bird and woman or part fish and woman. He has painted them exactly what they were; women divers.

Chapter Five - The Sexual Ape

Since Darwin, it has been generally accepted that humans have evolved from apes. The general public knows about four different species of ape, orang-utan, gorilla, chimpanzee and gibbon. You will see all these apes featured on wild life programmes on TV. Yet there is one other ape that doesn't get the same coverage, and that is the bonobo. On my spell checker as I am writing this, all the other apes are spelt correctly but the spell checker doesn't even recognise the word bonobo, even though along with the chimpanzee this ape is the closest species to us. So we can learn a lot about our ancestors by examining the behaviour of both apes. Interestingly, people are comfortable with the behaviour of chimpanzees because the males are very violent and brutal. (Just ordinary, good o' macho males) Yet they are not so comfortable about the behaviour of bonobos and this is because they are the, "the make love not war, ape."

The bonobo was first discovered by Europeans in 1929 and was considered to be only a subspecies of the chimpanzee. It was first called the pigmy chimpanzee. More recent research has shown it to be very different from the chimps. Being more lightly built and having longer legs, it has the body structure more similar to a human than any other ape. In fact the skeleton of the bonobo ape is very similar to the early hominid Australopithecus, discovered to be 3 million years old and the

Australopithecus Ramidus, which dates back 4,4 million years. For this reason the bonobo has been called a living fossil, so similar is it to our earliest human ancestors. The most well known of these ancient humans was called “Lucy” She was discovered near the Red Sea, an area which at that time was flooded by an ancient sea called the Sea of Afar. It seems pre-human apes were living in flooded forests, salt marshes; mangrove swamps, lagoons and offshore islands. This is not a lot different to the habitat of present day bonobos living near the Congo River, where the forest is frequently flooded. Lucy’s bones were also discovered lying among the remains of crabs, crocodile and turtle eggs. So it seems that Lucy had a very similar life to present day bonobos except that the area she lived in was more aquatic. So it means we can get a great understanding of early human behaviour by examining the nature of the bonobo.

Back in the 1960s, professor Leakey, trying to understand how early humans behaved decided that an insight into this could be gained by observing different species of apes in the wild. He decided that women were better observers than men, so he used women like Jane Goodall observing chimpanzees and Diane Fossey studying gorillas. The result of this brought about a revolution in the study of apes, and many new things were discovered. It was found that chimpanzees were able to make tools. Up until then scientists believed that only humans could do this. Also it was discovered that gorillas were gentle and peaceful creatures, though it was formerly believed that gorillas were dangerous and aggressive animals. All the other apes were observed in the same way, with the bonobo being only intensely observed in very recent times.

One of the first surprises about this ape is that it is very sexual in its behaviour. Like the human female, the bonobo female can still have sex even when her body is not ready for fertilization. It also indulges in homosexual sexual behaviour with both sexes doing this and can copulate face to face. (Though the orangutan has also been observed to do this as well).

In many other animals and apes, aggression between males and against females is quite common. Most animals overcome this aggression by having a strict hierarchical system where everyone knows his place. The animals with lesser social status give way to those with higher status. The animal's place in the system is controlled by its strength and aggression. So fights only break out when an animal of lesser status wants to achieve higher status in the pecking order.

The bonobo does have a similar system but aggressive behaviour between them is far less than other animals because of the way they use sex. In an article by Frans B. M. de Waal, in *Scientific America* he compares the different behaviour of chimpanzees and bonobos when two females and a male come across some food. In the case of the chimpanzees the food was bananas. Their behaviour was very straightforward. The male chimpanzee fed first until he had enough and he then took away as many bananas as he could carry. Then the dominant female fed herself, and the subordinate female it seems got nothing. In the case of the bonobos it was sugar cane, and their behaviour was more complex. The two females started by indulging in sex by rubbing their genitals together. The male bonobo displayed his erect penis to them, but they ignored him. Then the two females fed together equally and only when they had finished, was the male allowed to feed.

This it seems is normal bonobo behaviour. When there is a possibility of a dispute, the first thing they do is to have sex together which seems to defuse the situation. In this situation the natural aggression of male animals seems to work against the male bonobo in contrast to the way it helps male chimpanzees. As the female bonobos are less aggressive, it is easier for them to bond with each other, which they reinforce through sexual play. It then makes it easier for them to gang up on males, who although they do bond together through sex, are still more aggressive towards each other, than females. This makes them less able to co-operate and work together in the way the females can. This suggests that the bonobo could also be called, “The Sisterhood Is Powerful” ape.

In Milwaukee County Zoo the keepers attempted to train bonobos in the same way they train chimpanzees and other animals. The bonobos reacted by becoming extremely non co-operative. They would scream loudly at the zookeepers and urinate on them if they came into the pen. Then a female keeper took over and she adopted a system of kindness and positive reward. The behaviour of the bonobos changed and they became very co-operative and easy to work with. So it seems that bonobo females will not accept force and intimidation. Yet they will subject this on male bonobos.

In zoos it was found that females would gang up on a single male, and frequently assaulted him. One had fingers and toes bitten off and in one case a female bit off a male’s penis! It seems that this is normal behaviour in the wild but the difference is that the male can run away, but in a zoo, in a cage, he has no form of escape. So it seems to be normal behaviour for female bonobos to gang up and assault lone males to show them who’s the boss. (They also assault male zookeepers who come into their pen).

As the bonobo males are bigger than the females, they stand a better chance in a one to one situation but even here they can lose out. In a conflict, say over food, the female will immediately have sex with the male. The sexual bonding defuses the natural aggression of the male and they will share the food equally.

So this, it seems is how the slogan "make love not war" can work in practice, by having disputes settled by sexual intimacy. Comparing the bonobo’s behaviour with that of the chimpanzees we can assess how effective this is. Both animals share 99% of the genetic makeup of a human and we were all the same animal as little as 5-6 million years ago. As pointed out earlier the body structure of the bonobo looks very similar to that of an Australopithecus, an early pre-human with similar length arms and legs. From this it is speculated that the bonobo is more similar to our common ancestor than either the chimpanzee or the human. The human later grew longer legs and adopted a more upright stance while the chimpanzee grew longer and stronger arms to climb trees. As our body is shaped by our behaviour over evolutionary time, it is reasonable to suggest that how the bonobo behaves today is more like how our common ancestor behaved in the past.

The behaviour of the chimpanzees is of the traditional patriarchal society. Chimpanzees only have sex to fertilize the females when they are on heat. This is the ideal of the patriarchal Christian Church who has tried to enforce this type of behaviour for hundreds of years. It claims that sex only for the sake of pleasure is "sinful" and it should only be used for conception.

Chimpanzees tend to bond through fear and mutual protection, with groups of males holding on to a territory against other groups of males. There often seems to be war between these different groups over territory, resulting in males getting badly injured or even killed. As the males have to stick together to fight off the territorial ambitions of other groups of male, they bond closer together than the females. Males not only show aggression to other groups of males but to each other, as they will charge each other or show off their strength to try and intimidate each other to gain more status in the pecking order. Aggression is also shown towards females, who being smaller than males, have to give way to them in all disputes. Jane Goodall, who has observed this behaviour, claims that alpha males train the females they want to mate with through intimidation and fear. So they will be too frightened to refuse when the alpha male when she is on heat.

The Japanese primatologist Mariko Hiraiwa-Hasegawa wrote a graphic account of this. She was observing two chimp communities she called M and K group. One day she discovered the alpha male of M group, called Ntologi, with four of his sidekicks, attacking a lone female from K group and her three-year-old child. With the help of a companion Hiraiwa-Hasegawa attempted to frighten the male chimps off by beating them with canes, but the powerful males ignored them. Then her companion threw a rock at the males and this had the effect of making them back off. (Had the male chimps instead attacked the two humans they wouldn’t have stood a chance against the powerful chimpanzees). The life of the female was saved although she and her child were covered in blood and badly injured. A year later the same female had another child and was again attacked by Ntologi and his henchmen. This time they ate her baby alive. After this the female defected to M group and mated with her baby’s murderer, probably because she couldn’t any longer find safety in F group for herself and her children. A postscript to this was that Ntologi himself was later murdered by his second in command, so he could take over the position of the alpha male. Hiraiwa

Hasegawa later gave up observing chimpanzees because she was so appalled by their behaviour, that she learnt to hate them.

In contrast, in the bonobo society, nearly all aggression is defused through sexual bonding. It has been observed in zoos that if say a cardboard box is thrown into the enclosure and more than one bonobo shows interest in it, they will then briefly mount each other before playing with the box together. Or if one jealous male chases away another male near a female, the two males will then reconcile with each other by engaging in scrotal rubbing together. The same will be true if two adult females have a dispute over the behaviour of one of their children. They will reconcile by rubbing their genitals together. Male bonobos rarely fight each other over status. A male bonobo stays attached to his mother all his life and his status in society depends on the status of his mother, whom he will look to for protection from any aggression by other bonobos, even though she may be smaller than him in size.

In human behavioural studies it has been noted that people who live in very stressful situations like extreme poverty, war, prison, an aggressive family or neighbourhood, tend to become very desensitized and so they are far less affected by fear and pain. In Hellabrun, Germany, in World War two there was a zoo, which housed both chimpanzees and bonobos. One night the city was bombed and the bonobos died of fright from the noise, while the chimpanzees were completely unaffected. This demonstrates how desensitised chimpanzees have become living in their brutal patriarchal society, and how sensitive bonobos are, living in a more peaceful matriarchal world.

Apart from the fact that chimpanzees do not get married or "pair-bond”, its society is very much like a normal human patriarchal society. Until bonobo behaviour was studied properly, chimpanzee behaviour justified the patriarchal society as being "natural" for humans. So it is of interest that when primatologists first started to study bonobos in zoos during the 1950s the first findings were completely ignored by the scientific establishment until the 1970s. Even today most people are unaware of the behaviour of the bonobo or even that such a creature exists. The reason for this silence is because the bonobo's behaviour undermines all our patriarchal beliefs about human and pre-human behaviour.

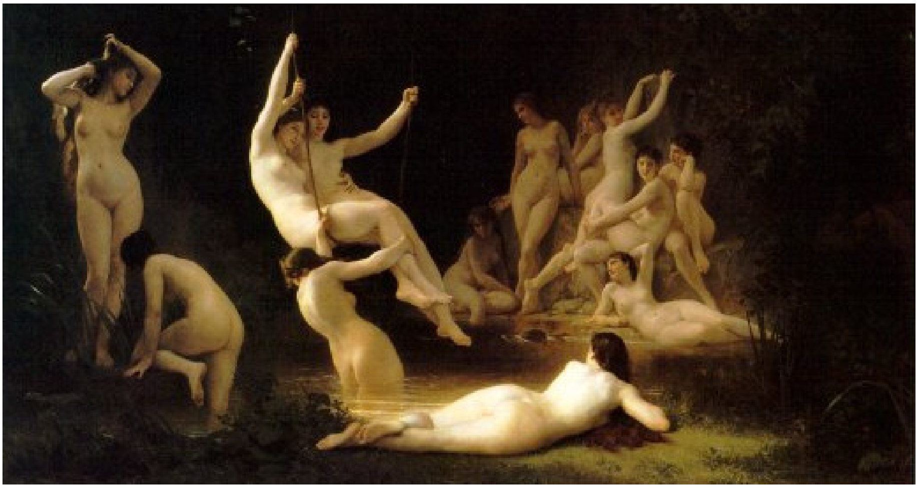
Many scientists would like to believe that our ape ancestors behaved more like a chimpanzee than the bonobo. But there is a good reason for believing that early humans behaved more like bonobos. Even though the chimp is slightly smaller than the average human it is about 3 times stronger. Now it seems that in evolutionary terms size and strength mostly comes about through sexual selection. This is why bulls and rams and many other male species of animal fight each other, so that only the bigger and stronger males get to mate with the female. The same is true with the chimpanzee and gorilla, where the big powerful alpha males are more likely to mate, than weaker males lower in the pecking order.

This is not true of the bonobo; the size and strength of a male bonobo is not a factor in whether he gets to mate with females, because no male bonobo is refused sexual access to females by other stronger males. So the bonobo is more like a human, as it has a slight body build it is weaker than a chimpanzee. This is why the gorilla has developed into a ground dwelling ape. Gorilla males compete with each other for females and the biggest and strongest is able to have a harem of females whom he can mate with. Unfortunately this has resulted in gorillas becoming so large and heavy that the adults find it difficult to climb trees. The orang-utan in South-East Asia is having the same problem, as it is getting too heavy to continue to live in trees. The bonobo doesn't have the same sexual selection evolution to be bigger and stronger, so with its lighter build is more able to climb up tall trees and live in the forest canopy.

When humans broke away from the common ancestor of chimpazees, bonobos and humans 5-6 million years ago, it would have had to have a similar social system to the bonobo, because humans have a similar body build to the bonobo. This is because the evolutionary pressure that ensures that bonobos have a slight body means that the same evolutionary factors must also have brought about the weaker body that humans have, compared with all other apes. It means both the bonobo and human are the same because the males not competing with each other through brute strength for sexual access to females.

If the bonobo is a very sexual ape then it has to be said that so is the human. The chimpanzees only partake in basic reproductive sex, but bonobos like humans, can share all kinds of sexual pleasures, including cunnilingus, fellatio, masturbation, massage, bisexuality, sex in different positions and group sex. Also like humans in love, copulating bonobos often look deeply into each other's eyes.

Although patriarchal societies have attempted to restrict sexual relations to the confines of marriage, many humans have always had urges to want more than this. In all patriarchal societies none have been able to prevent prostitution. While in secret and sometimes quite openly both men and women have had relationships outside of marriage. In very recent times with the decline of the patriarchal society, marriage is breaking down in Western countries. This has resulted in many people frequently changing sexual partners, having "one night stands", joining sex-clubs, going to sex-parties, advertising for sex in contact magazines or having "open" relationships. So why do many people have the urge to have sex with many different partners? Patriarchal society with all its laws, religious and social censure has failed to stamp this behaviour out. The only reason could be, is that before the patriarchal society took control with all its laws restricting people's behaviour, sexual behaviour must have been very similar to that of the bonobo.



The Painting by William Adolphe Bouguereau (1825 - 1905) called; "nymphaeum". This painting would be the idealized and mythical version of nymphs but it may be not that far from the truth. Perhaps before the influence of patriarchy, women divers like bonobos did form a powerful lesbian sisterhood. Also like the bonobos they tamed men and defused conflict through the freely availability of sex. (Nymphaeaum is an ancient Greek and Roman word; meaning a monument consecrated to the nymphs, mostly around springs. Originally they were natural grottoes inhabited by nymphs but later became sacred sanctuaries and places of learning.)

Bonobos, like humans, also tend to eat food in the company of other bonobos in big dinner parties. It seems that when fruit is in abundance bonobos will collect the fruit for a large community feast. They will then eat it together, in a big banquet, after the high status females have eaten first. This is very unlike the chimpanzees that will generally hide food from others and eat alone. Another interesting point is that human couples have romantic evenings together. This involves sharing a meal together, either at a restaurant or sometimes at home, then having sex together. This is also what bonobos couples do, though they tend to have sex before the meal and not afterwards.

It is well known that many couples that have a "flaming row" will afterwards "make up" by having sex together. Some couples claim that they enjoy a turbulent relationship because they enjoy the making up afterwards. This is similar to the bonobo behaviour of using sex to defuse conflict.

So like the bonobos, humans associate conflict and food with sex. In times of war it used to be that when a conquering army took a town or city, all the women and even sometimes the men were raped. This behaviour is generally seen as an expression of power over conquered people. This is probably true, but looking at bonobo behaviour there could be another reason. Perhaps it is a form of unconscious reconciliation by rape. Soldiers in warfare can become very aggressive in battle; even disciplined troops have been known to slaughter defenceless civilian populations after a battle, because of this fear- induced aggression. So rape may defuse this situation, making it possible for the soldiers to calm down and prevent a killing spree.

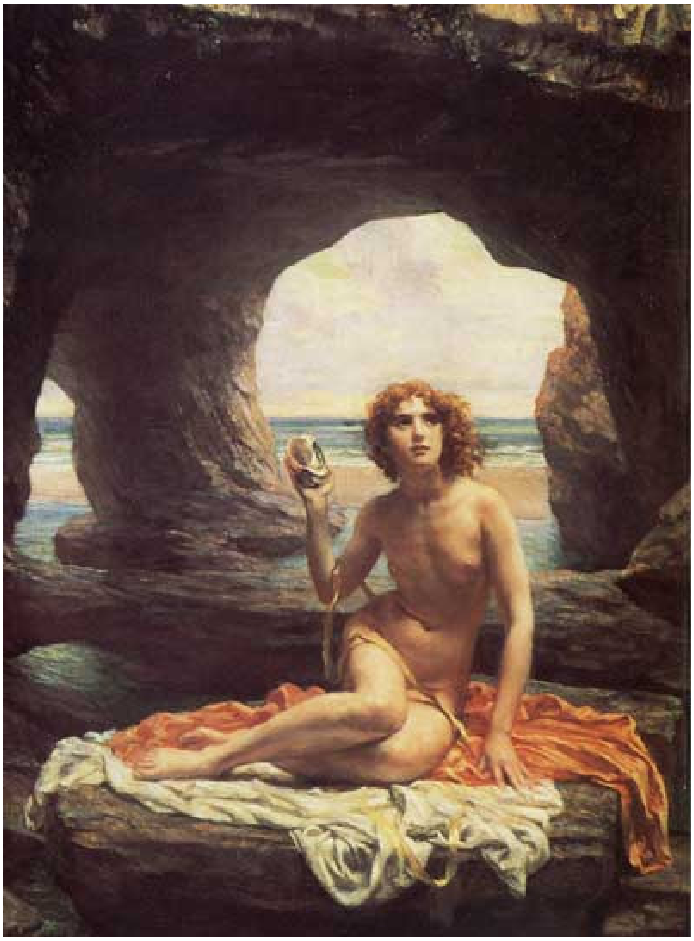
As previously mentioned, mermaids were associated in the past with prostitution. This is also true of ancient Goddess religions. Patriarchal priests condemn as temple prostitutes, the priestesses of these religions. (In the past when people used to worship Goddesses this was an indication of a matriarchal religion, in much the same way as the worship of a god is an indication of a patriarchal male- dominated religion.) As we can see in Korean haenyo communities, it is the female who is the breadwinner while her husband looks after the children. The same was probably true of mermaid communities in Europe, where it would be logical for the women to be the breadwinner. Likewise the mermaid and the nymph had a reputation of sexual liberation, and perhaps the mermaid communities, before being controlled by patriarchal customs, had societies similar to that of the bonobo. It is of interest that the word nymphomania, meaning women with uncontrollable sexual desire, comes from the word nymph.

When the Romans first conquered Britain, many of the Celtic tribes were still ruled by Queens. Their behaviour was seen as being very scandalous by later writers, as some of these Queens would openly have sex with large numbers of different men. So it does suggest that the old matriarchal societies were far more sexual than the later patriarchal societies. It could also suggest that a matriarchal society was as sexual as a bonobo society. People bonded together through sexual behaviour, allowing them to be more intimate with each other. This in turn will create a more intimate, caring and loving community.

War has been "normal" throughout recorded history. There has never been a time when there hasn't been a war going on in some part of the world. Many people have written about the senseless suffering of war, and have looked unsuccessfully for ways to prevent future wars. The study of both the chimpanzee and bonobo societies shows there is an alternative to war. In the non-sexual chimpanzee society, conflict and war is normal. In the very sexual bonobo society, conflict is rare. So because of the study of these different ape societies we find that the slogan "make love not war" is not a joke but does in fact work very well with bonobos.

It is of interest that Frans de Waal who has written books and articles about the bonobo was criticized by Richard Dawkins, the author of the book *The Selfish Gene*, for “bad science”. This is understandable, because observations of the bonobo undermine completely Dawkins belief that all life is basically selfish. Perhaps it would be “good science” to ignore the bonobo completely and only concentrate on the chimpanzee. Dawkins also criticizes the anthropologist Margaret Mead. Her crime was that she observed human nature in a positive light. The fact that she was both a famous scientist and a feminist at the same time may have upset many of her male colleagues.

We humans have a choice. As pointed out previously both the chimpanzee and bonobo are the closest species to us, and we can clearly see similarities in their behaviour to ours. The behaviour of the chimpanzee is very similar to a patriarchal society in that it is very violent and relatively non-sexual. In contrast the bonobo live in a very sexual world where both males and females bond together through many different forms of sexual play. If we copied them we would all get to be laid, have sex with multiple partners and experiment with heterosexual and homosexual sex play. The bonus is that by bonding through sex we won't have to fight wars any more. Is it that easy? Well probably not, as human society is far more complex than that of the bonobo.



At Low Tide a painting by Sir Edward John Poynter. This is a curious painting, because although it is a idealize picture of a mermaid. In the real world this is exactly what sea-women would be doing at low tide, collecting shells, crabs, seaweed and other marine foods on the beach before the tide comes in again.

Photograph of ama diver from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Chapter Six - Did Women Once Rule The World?

Throughout the 19th and 20th century there was a big controversy about the origins of civilization. Official historians claimed that civilizations started with the Ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians, while many other people were claiming that civilizations started in the sunken continents like Atlantis in the Atlantic or Mu in the Pacific. And if this is not mad enough, in the 1960s Erich Von Daniken wrote his famous book *Chariots Of The Gods*, which claimed that civilization was started by aliens from outer space. He wasn't the first person to write about this, but somehow it was this book that captured the public's imagination. Official historians have attacked these claims and in the case of Erich Von Daniken managed to completely demolish his arguments. Unfortunately all the claims of sunken lost continents and aliens from space are red herrings that have distracted the public from the real problem with official history.

What the public is told is that in the Stone Age, men, (women are hardly mentioned) were savage brutes, but then suddenly about 5,000 years ago sophisticated civilizations like Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia suddenly appeared out of nowhere. This point was made by the anthropologist Richard Rudgley in his book *Lost Civilisations Of The Stone Age*, when he wrote.

In both the extraterrestrial and the lost – continent models the basic theory is the same. Lost or hidden civilizations – be they alien or Atlantean – existed before those of Egypt or Mesopotamia and taught the latter everything they knew. The 'evidence' for such prehistoric civilizations is provided not by the physical remains of aliens or by the archaeological remains of Atlanteans, as neither, of course, exist. Rather it argued that the astronomical knowledge and the advanced technology of the ancient world obviously could not have been inherited from Stone Age cultures and therefore can only be explained by recourse to Atlantis or aliens. Such views are extremely popular and influential, and this is partly due to public dissatisfaction with the standard academic view that does not explain the origins of civilization in a convincing way.

Rudgely then goes on to explain that civilization didn't start with the ancient Egyptians or Mesopotamians 5,000 years ago. Archaeologists can trace civilization back as far as 10,000 years ago. This begs the question; if civilization is far older than 5,000 years why aren't academics writing about this for the general public? Well, one archaeologist did do this and was savagely attacked for doing so. In 1974 the book; *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* written by Marija Gimbutas was published, which recorded the archaeological finds of the Pre-Egyptian civilizations throughout Eastern and Southern Europe and the Middle East. She was immediately attacked by other academics for writing a popular book, about this, for the public, and she has remained a controversial figure ever since. So what was the problem? Why doesn't the academic world want the public to know about the civilizations that existed before 3,000 years BC?

As Feminists have pointed out; history is basically his-story. It is the story of man not woman. When historians claim that man created the first civilisations 5,000 years ago they are perfectly correct. What they don't tell you is that women probably created all the civilisations prior to 5,000 years ago. Up until the 1960s male academics confidently claimed that 'man' invented agriculture, but with the rise of Women's liberation a few academic feminists began to question this. They pointed out that in a hunter/gatherer society it would be women who were gathering plants and therefore it would be women who then had the wit to plant seeds to grow a crop for next year. The problem with this for male academics was that if it were women who invented agriculture, then it would be women who started settled communities that created the first civilizations. This was of course unacceptable, because if you accept this, then you would also have to accept the possibility that women ruled these early civilizations. This is not as incredible as it sounds, because there is evidence that it could be true.

In recent years archaeologists have increasingly found more and more evidence of the possibility of a matriarchal age in the past. Yet we do not hear about this in either the mainstream media or in the alternative press. Yet if what is being discovered now is true, we will have to re-write ancient history and rethink what is the true nature of human beings. This is because what archaeologists are now discovering suggests that in the Stone Age we were not the savage brutes as portrayed in academic speculation or the popular media. We were in fact peace-loving people who worshipped an ancient deity called the Great Mother. Recent archaeological evidence shows that the history of war and violence only began after civilization got started.

The concept that women once ruled the world in ancient times is nothing new. A scholar called J.J Bachofen in the 19th century started it. He brought together all the evidence of matriarchy in ancient times then available. He was strongly criticized for this by other scholars who dismissed and discredited his work. Yet in spite of this, his work was to inspire the scholar James Frazer to write his famous book, *The Golden Bough*. It also influenced Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who publicly praised Bachofen's work. In spite of the condemnation of Bachofen the controversy wouldn't go away. Other scholars in the early 20th century also wrote about matriarchy, like Robert Briffault, Jane Harrison and Dr Margaret Murray. But this argument was kept very much within academic circles. Then in the 1940s the poet Robert Graves wrote his book, *The White Goddess*, which was the first attempt to bring this argument to the general public, even though it was a very complex book and not an easy read for the average reader. Then on the wave of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s feminist scholars like Merlin Stone and Barbara G. Walker also continued to dig deep into ancient history to find more evidence of matriarchy in ancient times.

After the Second World War archaeologists started to make finds that also supported the idea that there was a matriarchal age in the past. This evidence was again dismissed by academics but feminist writers like Elizabeth Gould Davis were brave enough to directly claim that women did once rule the world. Riane Eisler kept strictly to feminist dogma and claimed that in the matriarchal age the sexes were equal. But the biggest change in recent years is from archaeological evidence that supports the ancient Golden Age myth, which has been written about in ancient Greek Legend, by the Taoist Chinese, and even in the Bible in the story of the Garden of Eden,

Ama diver ready to dive into the sea. Photograph from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

which comes from a Mesopotamian Golden Age legend. In fact most ancient cultures all over the world have a Golden Age myth of some kind.

Up until recently modern academics have rejected these legends as pure myth. Not only do they sound too good to be true, but recorded history shows a different story. It seems that the further you go back in history the more brutal and violent men seem to behave. For instance, to see gladiators fighting to the death as a sport as in the Roman games would be unacceptable in every society today. So archaeologists and scholars have assumed that people in pre-historic times must have been even more brutal than people in historic times. The only findings that contradicted this was paleolithic cave art, found in France and Spain, which was so well executed that it undermined the belief that Stone Age people were ignorant brutes. In fact archaeologists at first refused to believe that these paintings could possibly made by Stone Age people, and it was only modern dating techniques that convinced them. Also the number of feminine images found in both Stone Age and Neolithic sites showed that Stone Age people might have other things on their mind than violence. But academics dismissed these finds as being part of a fertility cult and never took them seriously. During the second half of the 20th century, archaeologists dug more and more into Neolithic sites and too much feminine imagery was being discovered, to be lightly dismissed. They began to find evidence that turned the idea that we were brutal savages in pre-historic times, on its head.

In the 1960s an archaeologist called Mellaart led a team to excavate a site in Anatolia in Turkey. This site turns out to be the oldest city ever discovered. Called Catal Huyuk it goes back over 9,000 years. What was discovered goes against all assumptions archaeologists have about people living in Neolithic times. They couldn't find any fortifications to defend the city or any weapons of war. Neither could they find signs of violence committed on people buried in graves. It was also a city full of feminine imagery to the degree that Mellaart was forced to say that the people worshipped the Ancient Great Mother.

So unsettling was these discoveries that the Turkish Government closed the site down for thirty years and the academic world chose to ignore the implications of these finds. The prevailing view was that warrior tribal leaders who conquered other tribes, and then had to build fortifications to defend themselves, created the first civilizations. So to have the oldest city ever discovered that didn't have any fortifications, weapons of war or signs of violence greatly contradicted this theory. As in many cases in science when new facts opposed a very popular and fashionable theory then it was the facts that were ignored until enough facts are produced to make the fashionable theory totally untenable. So most academics chose to ignore completely these finds except one archaeologist, Mariji Gimbutas, who was brave enough to challenge the accepted wisdom of the academic world. She was to say boldly. -

Archaeologists and historians have assumed that civilization implies a hierarchical political and religious organization, warfare, a class *stratification, and a complex division of labour. This pattern is indeed typical of androcratic (male dominated) societies such as Indo-European but does not apply to the gynocentric (mother/women-centred) cultures described in this book. The civilisation that flourished in Old Europe between 6500 and 3300 BC and in Crete until 1450 BC enjoyed a long period of uninterrupted peaceful living which produced artistic expression of graceful beauty and refinement, demonstrating a higher quality of life than many androcratic classed societies.*

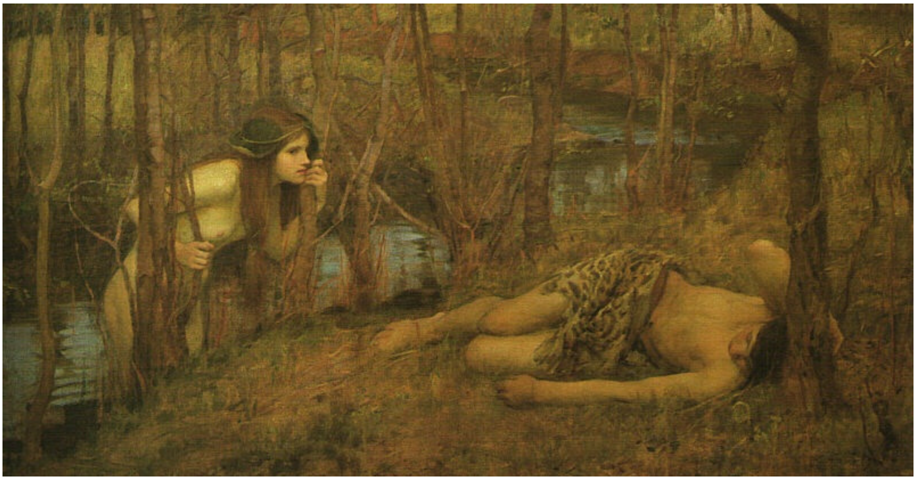
The late Marija Gimbutas was digging in another Neolithic site in Achilleion, Thessaly in Greece and also found artefacts of feminine imagery and no sign of violence and warfare. In her books and scientific papers she highlighted the Neolithic findings that archaeologists had made at Lepenski Vir and Vlasac in Northern Yugoslavia, as well as the Neolithic findings by Soviet scientists in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldavia, and the Western Ukraine. Western archaeologist had made similar finds in Crete, Cyprus, Thera, Sardinia, Sicliy and Malta.

All showed peaceful societies that worshipped the Great Mother. Yet archaeologists chose to ignore these findings, because they contradicted the belief of the time that male warrior leaders started civilization. It was only Gimbutas who was brave enough to take these finds seriously and she became a very controversial figure.

Other archaeologists also made similar finds. In the excavation of the Indus Valley civilization in Pakistan going back 7,000 years, again archaeologists could find no signs of violence or weapons of war. This was a very advanced civilization with running water to all homes, and even a sewage system. The town planning of these towns and cities was far in advance of the Egyptian and Roman cities thousands of years later and only equaled in the 19th century in the western world. What was disturbing for the archaeologists was that they couldn’t find any large palace for the ruler, or even rich and poor houses; it seems to have been an egalitarian society. As in Catal Huyuk the people worshipped Goddesses.

The same is true of Caral in Peru, the oldest city ever discovered in South America, going back 5,000 years. Given the violent history of later South American civilizations, with mass human sacrifice, archaeologists expected to find the same thing. But no matter how hard they looked they couldn't find any evidence of human sacrifice, warfare, fortifications or any other indication of violence. They had to conclude that this civilization existed in peace for thousands of years.

It seems that Caral wasn't just an isolated city, as archaeologists found trading goods at this site from all over South America, demonstrating it was the centre of a vast trading network that covered most of this continent. This suggested that not only did Caral live in peace, but this was true for the whole of South America at the time, as they had no fear of attack from any other people on this continent.



Painting by John William Waterhouse called, *A Naiad*. Apparently she is spying on a sleeping Hercules. Naiads in ancient Greece were freshwater nymphs and according to Robert Graves the original people of Greece. Suggesting that they lived in the wetlands in matriarchal communities until invaded from the North by patriarchal tribes. Hercules fought against the Amazons and was a hero of the patriarchal people. Under the patriarchal Greek religion, Naiads then became the daughters of Zeus, which didn't stop him from raping and seduced them, which was probably a refection of the patriarchal invaders behavior towards Naiads. It seems that many of the early kings; (warlords) married naiads to legitimatize their rule.

The overwhelming evidence of these finding have made more modern academics wonder if Mariji Gimutas might be right after all. Some archaeologists are now supporting her like Richard Rudgley in his book *Lost Civilizations Of The Stone Age*, and his TV series *Secrets Of The Stone Age.* So what are the implications of these findings?

As Richard Rudgley points out, 95% of our existence as humans is in pre-historic times. Yet we know little about this time; it is only from the tools, paintings and carvings found in excavations that we can get an understanding of what life must have been like then. All carved and painted images of human beings found in the Stone Age are overwhelmingly images of women. What Marija Gimbutas shows is that most of these images celebrate the whole process of birth.

It seems in prehistoric times menstruation, the vagina, the sexual act, giving birth, and breast-feeding were seen as something divine, holy and sacred. This is in contrast to historic times where menstruation became taboo and unclean in many societies. The sex act also becomes sinful and dirty. It was also claimed that children were born in sin because they were born of women. Even breast feeding become shameful; in our modern world many women will still not breast feed in public as they are made to feel ashamed of doing this.

This is supported by the findings of Gimbutas who showed that the downfall of many of the peaceful Goddess civilizations was caused by violent patriarchal tribes invading them. So it suggests that it was the invention of war that ended the last Golden Age. The new rulers behaved like Mafia bosses in imposing a reign of terror on the people to control them, and started a protection racket that was in effect the first taxation. This made the rulers very wealthy and forced poverty onto the people. They now had to not only to work to feed and shelter themselves, but they had to work to feed the new rulers and their armies, as well as build them palaces and fortifications and make arms and luxury goods. The new rulers encouraged men to no longer respect women and make them their slaves.

This is clearly seen in the contrast between the findings of the Neolithic age, where we see a predominance of feminine images, and no evidence of warfare and violence and the later Iron Age where we find more than anything else images of war, violence and the glorification of kings, rulers, conquest and wealth. Archaeologists studying the Iron Age also find graves where people have clearly been put to death through violence. We also have the first myths of the hero who conquers other nations, as well as male gods who begin to lay down strict laws and punish those who dare to disobey them.

Now evidence of matriarchy doesn't only come from the past; the shocking fact is that the general public is completely unaware that there are many matriarchal communities that have survived until the present day. The biggest is the The Minangkabau people in Western Sumatra and numbers about 4 million people. It is the largest and most stable matriarchal community in the world today. In China there are also matriarchal communities. In India there is a region called Kerala, which was matriarchal and has a reputation of being a well run, stable and prosperous area. There is evidence of matriarchal communities that survived in Africa up until colonial times. There are even American Indian tribes that are still matriarchal. The Basque people of France and Spain were matriarchal in historic times, but were finally destroyed by the Inquisition and the medieval witch-hunts.

There are legends that the Czech people were matriarchal up until the sixth or seventh century. It seems that after Libuse, the last matriarchal ruler, had died there was a patriarchal take over. In this legend, the women fought back, led by two women warriors called Vlasta and Sarka. After a very long and vicious war the men finally won and created a patriarchal state. I have been told that there are over 150 matriarchal communities all over the world but you never hear about this in either the mainstream or alternative media.

So if we are looking for a conspiracy, we have to wonder why all these facts have been kept concealed and covered up for so long. From the time when Bachofen first put forward the idea that there once was a matriarchal age in the past, it seems that the establishment have worked very hard to conceal this fact, to the degree of destroying archaeological evidence.

In Malta there is a very large Neolithic Goddess temple. The first archaeology done on this temple was by a Roman Catholic priest. His effort included rubbing off important and irreplaceable wall paintings from the temple walls. Then he dug up the temple floor and took away all archaeological evidence, which has now mysteriously disappeared. When paleontologists in the 19th and early 20th century began to find statues of 'fat ladies' in Stone-Age excavations they were dismissed as simply 'fertility symbols', of no importance, and thrown away. So the knowledge of these carvings might have been lost forever had not other academics in the art world taken an interest in them. It was art connoisseurs who collected them and preserved them, for science.

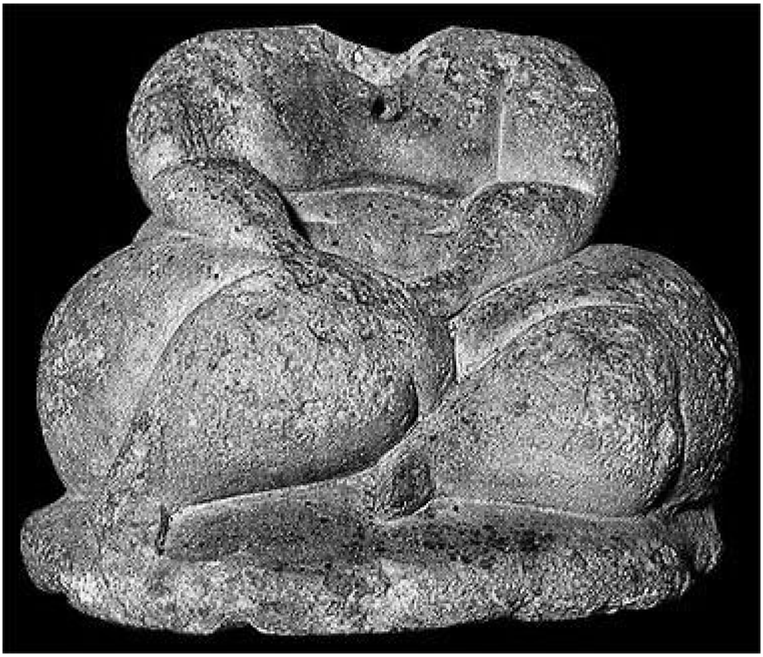
This behaviour is not unusual; when the Christian Church or the state of Israel finances archaeological excavations in Israel what they find fits in with what is written in the Bible. But excavations carried out by universities who do not have any affiliation to the Christian Church or the state find something completely different. For instance in the homes of ordinary Jews of two thousand years ago and older they find statues of Goddesses. The evidence is that the ordinary people of Israel were still worshipping the Goddess Asherah up until the Roman occupation. But archaeologists funded by Christians or Zionists do not find these Goddess statues.

Suppression of evidence to do with matriarchy and Goddess worship is commonplace in recorded history. Dr Margaret Murray did research on the witch-hunts in medieval Europe. What she discovered wasn't that the witch-hunts were started by hysteria as commonly believed. It was a ruthless campaign by the Christian Church to destroy a Goddess religion that still existed among the peasant class.

Going back even further when both the Christian Church and later on the Moslems became state religions, the first thing they did was to destroy as much as possible all ancient knowledge. The great library of Alexandria was destroyed both by the Christians and Moslems. As feminist academics have pointed out, their main targets have been Goddess Temples and female scholars of the time. It seems that from then on all evidence of a matriarchal age in the past has been suppressed or destroyed.

The reason for this is not hard to work out. If people in the last matriarchal age were worse off than people in historic times there wouldn't be a problem. Rulers in historic times could point to the fact that people are better off under their rule than people in the ancient past. But if the opposite is true, then there is a real problem. If it becomes general knowledge that people in our matriarchal past were better off than people even today then that would become political dynamite. People then would ask the obvious question, "would we all be better off if we had a similar society to the one we had in Neolithic times?" That is to say, a society that respects feminine values rather than masculine values. This could create a world- wide social revolution that would greatly undermine the power of our present ruling elite.

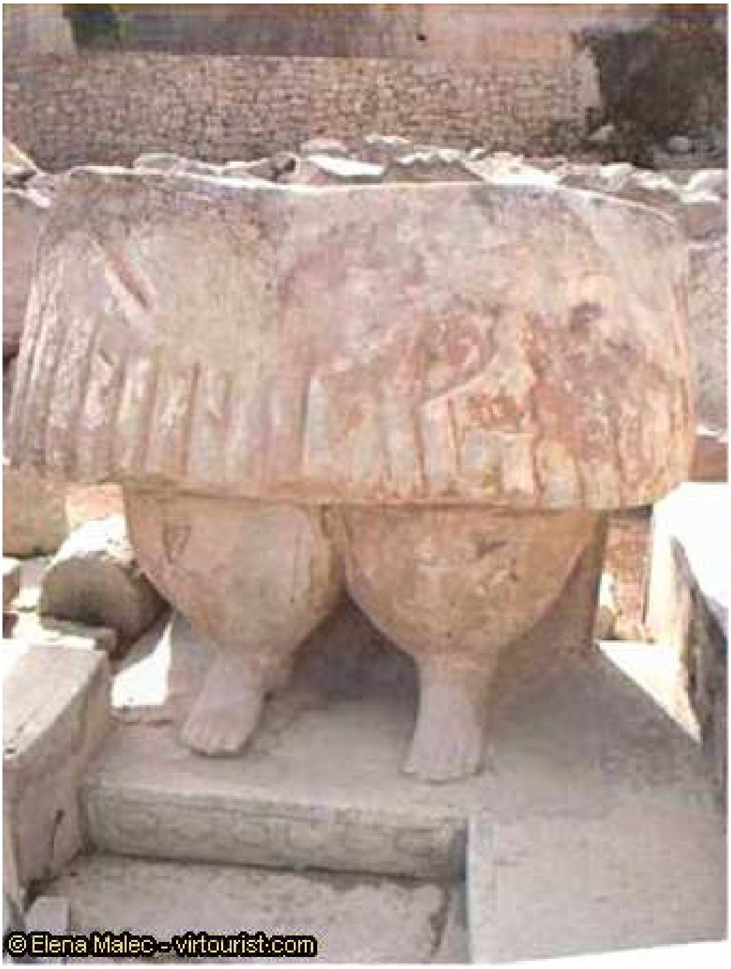
So the ruling elite does have a very good reason to suppress and destroy these facts. Graham Hancock recently has attempted to get archaeologists interested in the possibility that there are ancient cities under the sea that were flooded by the melting of the ice of the last ice age. He was greatly puzzled that these archaeologists showed no interest in this. But if the ruling elite are aware that more than likely these ancient cities were ruled by women, they would have a very good reason to not want archaeologists poking about these sites. Finding indisputable proof that women did once rule the world is political dynamite and could start a political revolution that would sweep away the power of our present ruling establishment.



The above Neolithic carving comes from Ancient Malta, although most people recognised it as a Goddess statue some male archaeologists claim it might be a carving of a man! This is because the figure doesn't have the breasts of a woman. This is very flawed reasoning, because many women have flat chests, and no fat man would have the very large hips, buttocks and thighs like this carving has. This demonstrates the strong bias many male academic have against any suggestion women in the past having any sort of power or status.

Many other carving of, "fat Ladies" have been discovered on Malta, suggesting that in the Neolithic age large women were held in high regard, so it might be that like the Stone-Age, "fat Ladies" they were all divers and the main breadwinners. Though there is little evidence of this, as no one has discovered large mounds of shell middens, on the island, as you would expect if people lived on shellfish. Which suggests that either the people didn't live of the sea, or threw the shells back into the sea after eating the flesh inside.

If this is not the case that they were not divers, to get to this size suggest these women would have to be ladies of leisure, who never have to do any form of physical work and were waited on hand and foot. (In modern time women can get very obese because of the abundance of food and so many modern labour saving devises like motorcars and washing machines, as well as office work that allows people to earn money sitting down all day). This suggests they were rich and powerful women who had servants or slaves waiting on them so they were probably rulers or priestesses of some kind. It would certainly have to be a culture where fat women were seen as being beautiful.



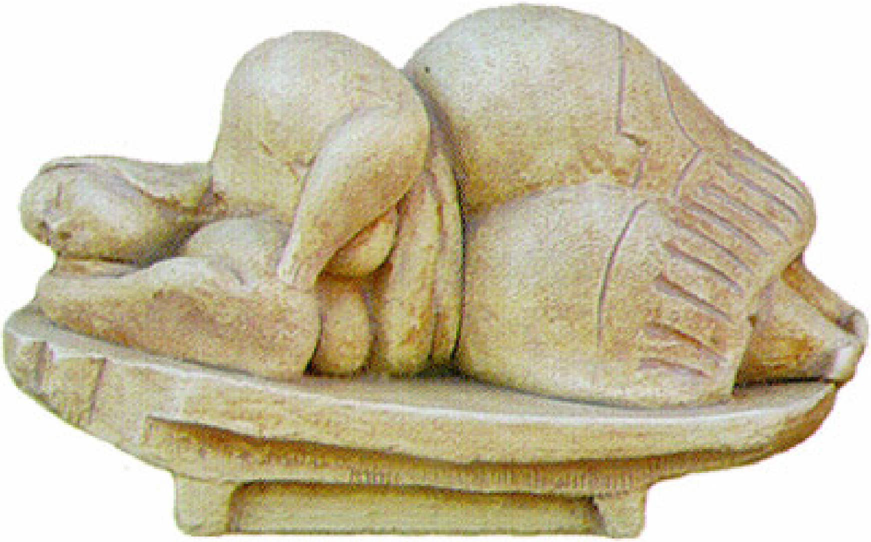
From web site http://www.virtourist.com/europe/malta/15.htm

The lower part of this "fat Lady" stands 2 meters high, so it original height would be over 4 meters. The stone Goddess Temples of Malta are the oldest large stone, freestanding building on the planet; the largest temple called Ggantija is a thousand year older than the Great Pyramid of ancient Egypt. How they were built is still a mystery, as the ancient Maltese people didn't have metal tools, and the island couldn't support a large workforce. While the architecture is unlike anything else in the world, with rounded walls, and temple's foundation built like the hourglass figure of women. Most of these temples were built in the Neolithic age although the Phoenicians were later to build Goddess Temples on the island as well.

Unfortunately most of these temples have since been destroyed but enough of them remains to give archaeologists some idea what they were like when they were first built. The Malta civilization may of even gone right back to the last Ice Age. Scuba divers have discovered the remains of underwater stone buildings around Malta. This means these building could only have been constructed during the last Ice Age when sea levels were as much as a 100 meters lower than today. This would make these buildings older than 12 thousand years.

Graham Hancock has written about this in his book, *Underworld,* and is puzzled why archaeologists are not interested in these underwater buildings. It would probably be a different story if Malta didn't have so much Goddess imagery on the island. If the ancient Malta civilization was clearly patriarchal then male academics would be comfortable with the idea of civilization going back to the last Ice-Age. But the suspicion that these underwater buildings might be more Goddess Temples, would worry chauvinistic male academics. Though it also has to be admitted that underwater excavations would also be very expensive. So it would need very rich people or a very rich institution to finance a archaeological excavation like this.

Underwater stone buildings have also been discovered off the coast of India as well but the oldest civilization in India is the Indus Valley Civilization where again they seemed to have worshipped Goddesses. So again a Goddess civilization is very unlikely to interest a male dominated academic world.



Statue of, "Sleeping Lady" found at Malta. The symbolism of this statue is very unclear. Some people claim she is a shamwoman, dreaming prophetic dreams.

Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island,* of a Ama on boat preparing to dive.

Photograph of Ama divers, by Fosco Maraini from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html
Amas use these floating tubs in which to put shellfish and seaweed when they bring them to the surface.

Chapter Seven - The Ancient Sea People

In 1947 Thor Heyerdahal and a group of friends made headlines all over the world by sailing a balsa wood raft from South America. They traveled over 4,000 miles before the raft was wrecked on a coral reef. This was the famous Kon-Tiki Expedition and for the majority of the public it was only a big adventure or publicity stunt. Yet this expedition did have a serious scientific purpose.

The Pacific Ocean is by far the largest ocean in the world, taking up nearly half of the surface of the Earth, and what is surprising is that Stone-Age people have settled nearly every island in that ocean. Even on islands that are uninhabited there are signs of previous habitation. What is more, it seems that the Polynesians who inhabit most of these islands sailed and navigated their way all over the Pacific Ocean using primitive canoes. European academics have formed theories about where the Polynesians originated and it was assumed that they come from South East Asia. Thor Heyerdahal disagreed with this, pointing out that to do this these ancient sailors would have to sail against all the prevailing winds and currents. This is certainly what the Spanish had to do when they ruled the Pacific. The only way they could go from South East Asia to the Polynesian islands was to follow the prevailing winds and go right around the Pacific. They had to go north past Japan, Siberia, and then across to Alaska and Canada, then sail down the North West coast of America until they hit the prevailing winds blowing west.

For this reason, Heyerdahal thought it was more reasonable to believe that the original inhabitants of the Pacific Ocean islands came from America. This itself is a controversial point, because it seems that the Polynesians may not have been the first inhabitants of the Pacific. Thor Heyerdahal claimed that the first inhabitants of both America and the Pacific island were white people, who were later overrun by Mongolian people from Asia.

When he proposed this, other academics made the point that the Native Americans didn't have any sort of sailing craft good enough to make such a voyage. Thor Heyerdahal disagreed and pointed to the balsa sailing rafts that South American Indians were using right up until the end of the 19th century. But he wasn't taken seriously, as these rafts were considered so primitive that no one in their right mind would want to sail across the Pacific in one. So to prove his point Thor Heyerdahal decided to build one and sail it across the Pacific himself. He didn't get right across the Pacific but he did sail it 4,000 miles before it was smashed on a reef. Subsequent experiments by Heyerdahl and others have demonstrated that by manipulating the raft's several centreboards, an amazing degree of maneuverability is possible. It's even possible to sail the raft upwind. Other people have since emulated this voyage and one expedition in the 1960s, sailed a balsa raft all the way from South America to Australia.

Now the fact that a very basic and primitive craft like a sailing raft could be sailed successfully right across the biggest ocean in the world, creates a problem for scientific dogma. This is because this dogma states that sailing craft that can sail across oceans is a comparatively recent technology. After all, we are told, the first man to sail across the Atlantic to America was Christopher Columbus in 1492, which was just over 500 years ago. The fact that the Vikings did the same thing 500 years earlier in open boats is ignored. In the Viking sagas it was claimed that Bjarni Herjulfesson discovered a new land, in 986, which was later called Vineland. He was sailing to Greenland, but was driven far southwest by bad weather. He sighted unfamiliar coasts but without landing anywhere he turned back out to sea and eventually reached Greenland. With this news other expeditions followed, and settlements were constructed. But modern historians in the 19th and 20th century disputed this claim, casting doubt on the whole story. This dented the national pride of Scandinavian countries, and in the1960s a Norwegian scholar, Helge Ingstad, through painstaking research of the

Viking Sagas managed to pinpoint where he thought they had settled in Newfoundland. His research proved to be correct, as signs of possible settlement were discovered on the surface. Then under the direction of archaeologist Anne Stein Ingstad a Viking settlement was unearthed, proving that the Vikings did sail to America 500 years before Columbus. Carbon dating on the site showed that this settlement was as old as the Viking Sagas said it was.

So the Viking claim had to be acknowledged by the academic world but even more controversial are the claims made about the Phoenicians. It is well known that the Phoenicians were the seafarers of the ancient world, and it has been accepted that they did sail around Africa. This came from the Greek historian Herodotus, in 600 BC where he wrote that the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho hired a Phoenician fleet to circumnavigate Africa, from the Red Sea around the Cape of Good Hope and up the West African coast to the Mediterranean. It took them three years to do this and the reason why they took so long was they stopped each autumn to plant crops and would harvest them before the fleet set sail again. Now this is a slightly fantastic story because to do this they would need to find a harbour to shelter their ships, or drag their boats out of the water onto the beach to protect them from storms. They then would have to clear land and sow it and then wait around for the crops to grow to harvest it. Also the Phoenicians were not known as a farming people, so perhaps this could be a cover story, invented by the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians were secretive people and didn’t reveal to outsiders with whom they traded. They also wouldn’t want to other people to know how quickly it was possible to sail around Africa, incase other nations try to do the same and become competitors to the Phoenicians for trade. So by taking their time allowed them to claim it was a long and difficult journey.

It is known that the Phoenicians sailed out of the straits of Gibraltar and had settlements along the Moroccan coast. They also sailed north to Britain and traded for tin in Cornwall. So did they cross the Atlantic and trade with the Native American people? The official line is that they certainly didn’t do this, which is a bit strange.

Crossing the Atlantic is not a big deal. In the 20th century all sorts of weird and wonderful craft have made it across. People have sailed boats across less than 11 feet long, many people have rowed all the way in open boats, wind surfers have sailed across; someone even made it in a amphibious jeep! A Frenchman in a rubber raft made the most remarkable journey. He did this by drinking salt water and living off the sea. So if all sorts of mad people can safely cross the Atlantic in very unsuitable craft why couldn’t this journey be accomplished thousands of years ago? After all Stone Age people successfully navigated the Pacific Ocean in canoes, which is more than twice the size of the Atlantic Ocean. So are academics suggesting that the people of Europe and the Mediterranean Basin were far less capable of sailing across oceans in the past, than the Polynesians? It is amazing that people in living in Europe, Africa and the Middle East don't feel insulted by such a suggestion.

Two ama divers negotiating heavy surf before they swim out to sea to begin their day's work diving. From Japanese web-site – http://www.iwase-photo.com/ama1.html

It is claimed that people of the past were afraid to venture too far out into the Atlantic because they believed the world was flat and were frightened they might fall off the edge. The problem is, that the Ancient Greeks were well aware that the world was round and one of their mathematicians even worked out to a reasonable accuracy the circumference of the Earth! So people of the past were not as daft and stupid as modern academics like to make them out to be. Actually there is a lot of evidence that the Phoenicians did trade in America. Ancient Greek and Roman coins have been found in America, as well as Roman pottery. Cretan, Phoenician and Celtic Inscriptions have also been found carved into rocks, and Phoenician graves have also been found. The official reaction to this is that all these finding are 'obviously' hoaxes. But there is one piece of evidence that is more difficult to dismiss.

In 1992 in Munich a Toxicologist called Dr Svelta Balabanova did some tests on Egyptians mummies using new techniques. To her horror the results showed that there was nicotine and cocaine present in the bodies. Now as every one knows the tobacco and coca plants are only found in America and these bodies were mummified thousands of years before Columbus discovered America. She was forced to do the tests again. Samples from the bodies were sent to other laboratories, and they came up with the same result. Everyone then assumed that the bodies were contaminated in some way, but Dr Balabanova was a forensic toxicologist who had worked for the police, and knew how to overcome the contamination problem. She took hair samples, washed them clean in alcohol and then tested them. She still found traces of nicotine and cocaine within the hair that could only get there while the person was still alive.

Then doubt was cast on the authenticity of the bodies themselves, with people suggesting they were Victorian fakes. So Dr Balabanova began to use her techniques on other mummies, and found the same thing. She traveled to wherever mummies were being stored and tested and found nicotine present in most of them. So she began to speculate that perhaps the ancient Egyptians grew an African species of the tobacco plant. But no one found any evidence of this, and anyway it didn't explain the cocaine also found in some of these bodies. The only explanation for this was that the ancient Egyptians were getting their tobacco and cocaine from South America. And the obvious way they were obtaining this was from the Phoenicians who were sailing to South America and back after trading with the American Indians.

Yet officially historians still won't accept this. They claim that the Phoenicians only sailed along the coast and never out to sea, in spite of the fact it is known that the Phoenicians navigated by the stars. The only reason why any sailor would navigate by the stars is because they sail out of sight of land. Also to assume that the Phoenicians never ventured out of sight of land shows a complete ignorance of sailing.

In a sailing boat the most dangerous place you can be, is within sight of land. This is because if a strong wind blows towards land you are in danger of being wrecked on shore. For that reason sailors like to keep well away from land, to give themselves 'sea room', if they get caught in a gale blowing towards the shore. Some more knowledgeable historians claim that what the Phoenicians did if they were caught on a lee shore in a gale was to quickly beach their boats and pull them up on the beach. Trying to beach a boat in a heavy sea is a dangerous thing to do, and it has to be remembered that the Phoenicians were traders so their boats would be laden with goods.

So even if they successfully got through the heavy surf they would still find it very difficult to pull a fully loaded boat up the beach. Not only that, not all coasts have beaches; on a rocky shore they wouldn't stand a chance.

Photograph from Japanese web-site.- http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html
Ama diver sculling her boat out to sea. (Sculling is a form of rowing with a single oar at stern of the boat

So hugging the coast wouldn't be an option. The Phoenicians, to be a successful seafaring nation, would have to be able to sail and navigate out of sight of land. This means their boats would have had the capability to sail to America. The only reason why we don't read about this in history is that the Phoenicians were basically traders and not conquerors. They preferred to trade with the American Natives, and they preferred to keep their knowledge secret, as they didn't want other nations doing the same and competing with them. This was a completely different attitude to Columbus and those who followed him. Columbus was simply the vanguard of the conquistadors who were more interested in conquest and looting, than trade.

If the Phoenicians did trade with America when did this trade start? There is good reason to believe that it may have started back in pre-historic times. In Neolithic age sites archaeologists have found two types of boats; dugout canoes and skin-boats. The latter are boats with a wooden frame and are covered with either animal skins or oil soaked cloth. At first glance it was assumed that such boats would be too flimsy to be used at sea, but when modern people built some and use them on the ocean they discovered they were very seaworthy vessels. What modern experimenters discovered was that these skin boats were much lighter than either dugout canoes or later planked boats, and therefore more able to ride over high waves. Also these boats were more flexible in heavy seas, which gave them an advantage over planked boats that was known to come apart in heavy seas. To prove how seaworthy these craft were; Tim Severin in 1976 sailed a 36-foot sewn skin boat across the Atlantic. Anyway, the Polynesians navigated the Pacific in dugout canoes so why couldn't Europeans and Africans do the same?

So vessels capable of crossing the Atlantic were being built in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin back in the Neolithic age. Then there is the question of navigation; how could Stone-Age people navigate across the Atlantic? Well, this wasn't a problem for the Polynesians, who were also Stone-Age people, and who successfully found their way to nearly every island in the Pacific. Also it seems the Neolithic people were very aware of the positions of the Stars. It has been assumed that Stone circles like Stonehenge were constructed for religious purposes, but they could have another purpose. The puzzle about the Stone circles found in Britain, France and Spain is that the stones line up with the stars. Knowledge of star alignments wouldn't be of much use to people living on land, but would be a big help to people who frequently sail out of sight of land. It is known that the first circles were originally made of wood, and were used to work out the positions and alignments to the stars. (They have to do this all the time, because as the Sun moves through the galaxy the positions of the stars are slowly changing all the time). The problem with wood is that in time it rots away, so the Neolithic people had to make the circles out of stone to get a better understanding of how the stars were slowly changing their positions over long periods of time.

This begs the question; why would ancient people want to do this? The same question can be asked of the Polynesians, why did they set out to explore the Pacific in primitive canoes? The reason could be that they were sea-people and lived in the sea.

Official history teaches us that the only way man was able to cross the oceans was when ships were made large enough to carry food and water to feed the crew for a voyage of many months. The experiences of the Polynesians who used only canoes to cross the largest ocean in the world, is completely ignored. What official historians won't discuss is the possibility of living off the ocean. For instance, the crew of the Kon-Tiki expedition discovered that the big advantage of being on a sailing raft was that they were so close to the water that they were able to observe the marine life in the sea. What is more, they found it easy to spear fish and dolphins that were swimming under the raft. (This was in 1947 when the public was unaware of what wonderful, intelligent creatures dolphins were). The result was that the Kon-Tiki crew found it easy to feed themselves without always having to use the stored food they carried.

After two months at sea; the water they carried turned foul and wasn't drinkable. So they discovered that they could reduce their need to drink by bathing regularly in the ocean. They also collected rainwater when it rained. Thor Heyerdahl also knew it was possible to squeeze fresh water out of fish that had just been caught, but apparently the crew didn't do this, as the water didn't taste very good. In the heat of the tropics they found they needed to use a large amount of salt tablets. Then someone had the bright idea of mixing the salt-water of the ocean with the foul tasting fresh water they carried. They mixed 20% of seawater with the fresh water supplies and discovered to their surprise it quenched their thirst. They were later to increase this to 40%. Thor Heyerdahl explained that the Polynesians told him that their ancestors were able to drink saltwater with immunity if they also chewed coca leaves. As far as I know, no one has tested this out scientifically so there is no way of knowing if this is true.

The experience of European sailors over the last thousand years or more has been totally different from this. There was no attempt to try and live off the sea, and they had a belief that you dared not try to drink saltwater. Scurvy was known to be a problem for sailors since the time of the Ancient Greeks. Back in the 17th and 18th centuries the British navy fed their sailors on salted meat and this was to prove disastrous, as it didn't have any vitamin C in it. Scurvy became rampant on Royal Naval ships. An extreme example of this concerns Commodore George Anson and his voyage around the world in 1741. In the war of the Austrian Succession, he was ordered to take a fleet of 7 ships to raid the Spanish possessions in Pacific. The fleet sailed down to the southernmost point of South America but trying to pass Cape Horn his fleet encountered a storm so bad that only three of his ships made it around the Horn. (A Spanish fleet ordered to intercept Anson's fleet was also caught in the same storm, which decimated the whole fleet.) In the Pacific, scurvy hit his crew so badly that two thirds died. This resulted in his having to abandon two of his ships, as there was insufficient crew to sail all three ships. After raiding a Spanish port on the South American coast he set sail across the Pacific in search of a Spanish treasure ship. He found one in the Philippines but by this time he didn't have enough men to fully man one broadside on his ship. In spite of this, he was still able to overwhelm the Spanish Galleon and capture it. Then he was able to sail back to England as a national hero and very rich man.

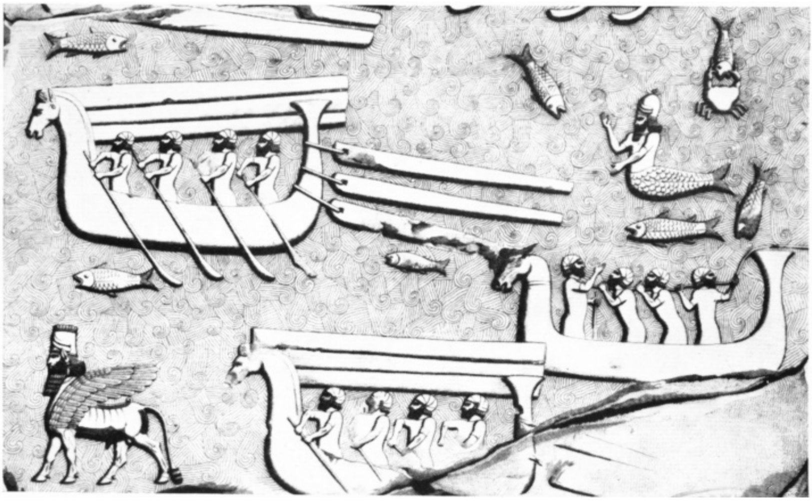
The irony of all this is that the ocean they sailed on was full of food, rich in vitamin C. The Polynesians didn't have any problems with scurvy and as far as we know, the Phoenicians didn't complain about this problem either. The reason for this might be because they were genuine sea people; they lived off the sea and therefore had a deeper knowledge of the sea than the European sailors who came later.

As previously mentioned we know about the sea-people who still live in South-East Asia, but there are also sea-people who once lived in the Mediterranean. We only know about these people from their enemies. It seems that the Egyptians recorded being attacked by people from the sea in 1231 BC. The Egyptians claimed they managed to fight them off and defeat them. There is doubt about this, because the sea people went on to destroy the Hittite, Mycenaen and Mitanni kingdoms. They then came back and invaded Egypt once again in 1191 BC. Then some sort of peace deal seems to have been done. The sea people settled down in Palestine and became the Philistines we read about in the Bible.

The great mystery is; who were these people and where did they come from? Like the sea-people in South East Asia they lived on boats, and had a powerful navy. It is clear they were displaced people, but who or what displaced them was unknown. They also weren't a single people being a mixture of many different tribes. So scholars speculate they were the victims of a great famine and invaded other countries to find more food. The problem is that there is no record of this happening anywhere. There is also the problem of the way the sea people behaved. They violently attacked the rich cities and the rulers within them, but made no attempt to loot the city's wealth. So clearly these people had different values and probably a very different social system to the people they attacked.

If they were like the sea-people we find today in South East Asia then this would make sense of their behaviour. If like them they lived in boats or houses on stilts or very close the shore, this would then solve the problem about where they came from, and why they were a loose confederacy of different tribes. The Asian sea-people are also a loose grouping of different peoples.

This suggests that the sea-people lived like haenyo and ama communities with perhaps women diving for shell-fish and seaweed and the men working on building boats and houses and even looking after the children. So they were the nymphs, sirens and mermaids of legend. They were happy to keep to themselves but perhaps rulers further inland began to interfere with their way of life. Perhaps one king decided to drive the sea-people away from the shore where he ruled and other rulers decided to follow suit. The individual tribes were not strong enough to resist but as they were herded down the coast they met with other sea-people tribes also being displaced until they found they had a big enough army to fight back. They then became strong enough to destroy the Hittite, Mycenaen and Mitanni kingdoms and gave the Egyptians a tough time.



This image was discovered on the walls of a palace in Khorsabad in Iraq, probably carved at about 700 BC. It probably shows sea people, because we have a merman in it who has a similar beard to the paddlers in the boats. There is also a winged bull with a man's head on it in the same picture. This would be like the centaurs of ancient Greece, which probably were the first cavalry troops the Greeks encountered. The wings represent the god-like status of the image; in some ancient images we also have mermaids with wings.

One country the sea-people didn't attack was the Phoenicians. It seems later on they became the same people or were the same people. So it means the sea-people were living lives that human beings lived for probably millions of years. They were experts at living in the sea and on the coast. A strong indication of this is the fact that the Phoenicians had a monopoly on the colour purple. The only way the people of the ancient world could produce purple was through a sea snail called Murex. Unfortunately only a small amount of dye could be produced from each snail so large quantities of snails had to be harvested, from the sea floor, to dye just one garment. There are hills outside of Tyre and Sidon, both Phoenician cities, which only consist of murex shells. The result was that only very rich people could afford garments dyed purple and because of this, it became a royal colour. The Romans even had strict rules on this and only Senators and Emperors were allowed to wear the expensive purple cloth. As the only way these snails could be obtained was by breath- holding divers, it suggests that the Phoenicians were probably diving people. It is known that the Phoenicians did very little farming and it was claimed that they were only traders, but more than likely they harvested the sea, like modern day Asia Sea people.

After being attacked it seems the sea people joined forces and formed a powerful confederacy, and became the Phoenicians, which allowed them to continue to live their lives without interference for a few more hundred years.

Then the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, conquered Phoenicia in 538. Phoenicia then became part of the Persian Empire and declined in power and influence. When Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian Empire the

Phoenician culture disappeared completely. However, the sea-people on the North African coast called the Carthaginians continued to flourish. Carthage became a major power and took over from Phoenicia as the major sea power in the Mediterranean Sea. Unfortunately they become rivals to Rome and had three wars with them. The Carthaginian general Hannibal invaded Rome and successfully defeated the Roman army, but he held back taking the city of Rome itself. This gave Rome time to recover and he was finally defeated defending Carthage. The whole Carthaginian Empire then came under Roman control, and the Carthaginians were 'Romanised'.

It seems that the sea-people continued to live along the Atlantic European coast, as we can see from the many mermaid stories that continue to arise from that area up until the 19th century. But with the defeat of both the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians, the power of the sea-people was destroyed and the people who began to dominate the sea were no longer the sea-people themselves. The Romans clearly learnt from the Carthaginians how to build ships and may have even traded with Native Americas. (Roman coins and artifacts have been discovered in America). Yet it seems they weren't as confident on the sea as the Carthaginians as the knowledge of how to live on the sea was forgotten.

It was only in the 20th century that some of this lost knowledge began to be recovered through the efforts of Thor Heyerdahl and a Frenchman called Dr Alain Bombard.

Two underwater Ama divers, from web-site. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island,* of a Ama going out to sea on boat.

Chapter Eight - The First Ocean Voyagers

If we take the Aquatic Ape, the mermaid myths, the modern knowledge of the sea gypsies and the ama and haenyo divers seriously, then we can say that people have been living on the sea for millions of years. Scientific dogma claims that the first Man only reached America 12 thousand years ago. They of course took the land route, when there was dry land in the Bering Straits, between Siberia and Alaska at the ending of the last ice age. The problem is that there is more and more evidence that there were people living in America long before 12 thousand years ago. This creates a problem. If this was so, these people would have had to reach America by sea. This would mean that before 12 thousand years ago there were people who could cross either the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans, in some form of boat, raft or canoe. Why this has to be a big problem is a mystery. Without labouring the point too much, the Stone-Age Polynesians did manage to sail across the Pacific. And if it is right that they did originally come from South East Asia, and did manage to get across the Pacific to Hawaii, then what is the problem of their going the whole way to America? The problem would be that according to official history the Polynesians first settled Hawaii as late as 1,000 years ago, so the Polynesian would have nothing to do with the first people traveling to America.

The difficulty is that there is some evidence that the Polynesians were not the first people to settle on Pacific islands. Archaeologists discovered on these islands some evidence of a culture older than the Polynesians. This is what the whole Kon Tiki expedition was about; Thor Heyerdahl wasn't trying to prove that only the Polynesians originally came from America, as many people believe, but a race older than the Polynesians had made the crossing. And just to make this more controversial it seems these ancient people were Caucasians. For this Heyerdahl has been accused of being a racist, but he has good reason for thinking this, because it seems the first people living in Japan and Taiwan were also Caucasians. Ancient graves of Caucasians were also found in China and now it seems also in America! Unfortunately because of national pride the Japanese and Chinese do not like any mention of ancient Caucasian people once living in their counties even though they still exist in both Japan and Taiwan. As usual, racial prejudice along with sexual prejudice makes it hard to get a clear idea of the true history of human kind.

In America there are now a number of archaeological sites that show human inhabitation before 12,000 years. In normal circumstances there wouldn't be a problem with these sites but because scientific dogma claims that human beings didn't come to America before 12,000 years then all these excavations are disputed.

At Santa Barbara, California, the bones of a woman were found on the Channel Islands just off the California coastline. This find over 40 years ago was recently dated to 13,000 years ago. This made the find very controversial because not only were the bones older than 12,000 years but evidence indicated that people then had watercraft in which to get out to the islands.

In Quebrada Jaguay, Peru, tools, hearths, food remains and potholes found in fishing site, dated to 13,000 years old

Monte Verde, Chile, human artefacts and stone tools and a shelter covered in a Mastodon hide has been discovered, dated to 14,000 years ago

At Wisconsin, butchered Mammoth bones with stone tools have been found dated to 14,500 years ago.

These three finds are now being accepted by orthodox scientists, and some are now accepting that perhaps people came across the Bering Land Bridge as early as 14,000 years ago. The problem with this is that 12,000 years ago was a time when Alaska and Canada was reasonably ice- free. If the date of 14,000 years ago is accepted then people traveling this route would have to travel over ice. This doesn't have to be a big problem as the Eskimos do it all the time. The trouble is that there are other sites that are considerably older than this.

At Meadowcroft, Pennsylvania, stone-age tools have been discovered that are between 17,500 to 25,000 years old.

At Cactus Hill, Virginia, stone artifacts and plant and animal remains dated to 18,000 years ago.

At Valsequillo, Mexico, 164 human footprints have been discovered dated to 40,000 years ago.

At Pedra Furada, Brazil, tools and a campfire found in a rock shelter dated to 50,000 years ago.

Topper, South Carolina, stone objects, believed to be made by humans, dated 50,000 years ago.

Now these finds are very, very controversial and the archaeologists who have made these finds are given a hard time by the more orthodox establishment. But the controversy doesn't stop there; ancient bones have been discovered that are not from Asian people.

Kennewick, Washington State, a skull 10,700 years old that is longer and narrower than today's Native American. It is claimed that the skull is Caucasian and may come from the original inhabitants of Japan or Taiwan.

Penon, Mexico, a skull of a woman was found, again longer and narrower than present day Native Americans, date 13,000 years ago making it the oldest human skull found in America. Again she had a Caucasian skull unlike that of Native Americans; it is claimed her skull is like present day Europeans.

But the most controversial find was made at Luzia, Brazil; a female skull dated 11,500 to 12,500 years ago was discovered, with features resembling an Australian Aborigine. So the mystery is; how did Australian Aborigines travel across the Pacific to South America? It has been suggested that people drifted there by accident. Now this is not as implausible as it first sounds. It would be possible to drift from Australia to South America.

As previously pointed out, when the first white settlers went to Tasmania, they found Aboriginal women diving for shellfish. It is true they were diving from rocks and there is no record of diving from boats, but it is known that Aborigines on the mainland did use dugout canoes. The experience from ama and haenyo divers is that they will dive from rocks but when necessary will use either rafts or boats. There is always a danger of a strong off shore wind beginning to blow as they are working, which would push the canoe or raft out to sea. It is true they would be good swimmers but even for strong swimmers, swimming against the wind and waves is very difficult. So they could be blown out to sea. If they get into the ocean currents they will find themselves drifting to New Zealand. There is in New

Zealand, already a controversy whether the Maoris were the first people in New Zealand, as archeologists have found signs of human occupation that dates before the Maoris got there. Also some of Maori folklore states this as well. They could also return to Tasmania the same way because the same current will take them back in a vast circle around the Tasman Sea. If they settled in New Zealand and traveled off shore on the East coast of New Zealand then they would likewise end up in America. As the South Pacific currents would take them there and likewise they could also travel back to New Zealand using the same current, which also goes in a vast circle. If Asian people wiped out Australian Aborigines in America, then the same thing could of happened in New Zealand when the Maoris first came. The trouble with this theory is that it is 13,500 kilometers or 8,450 miles from Australia to South America, so it could take many months to drift all this way. How would these Aboriginals survive months at sea with little food and no fresh water? The answer could be that being women divers they would have the knowledge to survive at sea.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

These are the words of the famous Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem; *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. We are all taught that it is fatal to drink salt water if we are shipwrecked and have to survive in a lifeboat. No one questioned this belief until Thor Heyerdahl, whose theory was confirmed by the work of Dr. Alain Louis Bombard, a French Marine biologist, and physician.

In 1951 while working in a hospital in Boulogne Dr Bombard had to attend to the aftermath of a Shipwreck. A trawler sank in bad weather outside the harbour, and although 43 bodies were brought to the hospital they failed to save a single case. This experience affected him so much he began to study the best way to improve survival chances following a maritime disaster. He began to study the reports of shipwrecks, interviewed survivors and discovered the main cause of death was dehydration. He decided that was the most important problem he had to solve. Reading medical literature, he was surprised to discover that the kidneys in the human body were able to cope with drinking saltwater. It was true, that too much salt could overwhelm the kidneys and do them permanent damage, but if saltwater was drunk in small quantities and this was done before the body became dehydrated, then drinking saltwater was possible. Doing this for more than seven days, however, would finally damage the kidneys. Shipwrecked sailors only have bad experiences with drinking saltwater because they do it as a last resort.

He then discovered that fresh fish contained within them between 50% and 80% usable water, which was salt-free. So like Thor Heyerdahl he found that fresh water could be squeezed out of freshly caught fish. Through further research he also discovered that plankton contained Vitamin C and could be obtained by scooping it up from the ocean with a fine mesh.

The irony of this is that the scourge of sailors, scurvy, caused by Vitamin C deficiency, could have been cured if they had known this. Knowledge like this was probably possessed by the ancient sea people but was forgotten when the people from the land took over sailing the seas and oceans.

Bombard then decided to see if he could test these theories in practice. He managed to find a rubber boat and on 25th May 1952, with an Englishman called Jack Palmer he tried to cross the Mediterranean Sea, without using the rations of food and water that they carried. They set out from Monaco and Bombard began drinking saltwater from the sea from the first day, Palmer didn't have the same confidence and declined to do the same. They managed to catch a few fish and squeezed a small amount of water from them. Palmer then began to try drinking small amounts of saltwater. Together they weathered storms but on the 7th June they met a French vessel which gave them food and water. Finally, on the 11 June they made it to the island of Minorca; they had traveled a 1,000 miles and spent 17 days at sea without using their emergency supplies.

Bombard felt the voyage had been a great success and proved his point, yet the media disagreed. He was attacked for accepting food and water from a French ship and so fierce was the criticism of him that his sponsor dropped out. Undeterred he found a new sponsor and decided to cross the Atlantic. Palmer didn't want to go, so Bombard decided to go on his own.

He sailed to the Canaries in another rubber raft, from Casablanca, but again the reaction from the press was still unfavourable. He continued across the Atlantic, living on fish and plankton, and continued to keep himself hydrated by drinking seawater and squeezing water out of fish. He also collected rainwater when he could. He suffered from sores, constipation and rashes and his boat sprung a leak through friction against one of the floats, which he had to repair at sea. He also had to endure visits from sharks and storms. Finally on the 22nd December he made it to the Caribbean and showed it was possible to sail right across the Atlantic without carrying food or water and living totally off the ocean. Yet even today many scientists still dispute his claim that you can live off the sea by drinking seawater, and say doing this is dangerous.

Bombard himself admits you have to know what you are doing. A person has to start drinking seawater before they are dehydrated, and only drink seawater in small quantities at a time. Also a person cannot do this forever and will need to drink some unsalted water after a week of drinking seawater.

Photograph by Fosco Maraini of ama diver, from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

What his voyage shows clearly is why the Polynesians were able to cross the Pacific Ocean in canoes that wouldn't be able to carry too much food and water. It also shows the possibility that sea-people crossed the Atlantic

Ocean thousands of years before Columbus, simply by living off the sea.

This is something similar to what happened when the first white people began to explore the Australian outback. They did this at first using camels and carrying all the food and water they needed. The Burke and Wills expedition was an example of this. In 1860 the Government of South Australia offered a prize to the first expedition to cross the Australian continent from south to north. Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills took up this challenge, and with 18 people, 25 camels, 22 horses and a 2-year supply of food, they set out from Melbourne on 20 August 1860. They made it to the Gulf of Carpentaria on the North coast of Australia but both leaders of the expedition died of hunger and thirst on the way back. The irony was that that Aboriginal people in the area tried to help them and gave them food, but Burke didn't trust them and chased them away by firing his rifle at them.

Because of the great problems in trying to carry enough food and water with them over the vast area of Australia, later white explorers learnt from the Aboriginals how to live off the land, and how to find and water in the dry Australian outback.

The same is true of the "dash for the South pole" in the early 20th century between Robert Scott and Gravning Amundsen. The Norwegian expedition led by Amundsen was first to reach the South Pole while the expedition led by Captain Scott got there a month later and the explorers all died on the way back. Many commentators have portrayed Scott as an incompetent fool, but this is unfair. Captain Scott led the first fully equipped scientific expedition to the Antarctic; there was nothing wrong in the way it was organized. The big difference was that Gravning Amundsen had previously spent two years living with the Eskimos or Inuit people. From them he learnt how to live in the wilderness of ice and snow. The scientific knowledge and well thought out planning of the Scott expedition, was no match for the thousands of years of knowledge gained by the Inuit people living in the harsh conditions of the Arctic.

The same is true of the maritime experiences of European sailors over the last two thousand years. The knowledge and way of life of the ancient sea-people was destroyed and ignored, so sailors sailed into the oceans with no knowledge of how to live off the sea itself. This is why they had to build ships large enough to carry all their food and water with them. Unfortunately they didn't have the technology or knowledge of how to prevent food from spoiling and they ended up eating poor quality food lacking the vital nutrient of Vitamin C, which resulted in scurvy. Knowledge is vitally important for sailors using wooden sailing ships. The sea people of South East Asia live in an area of both typhoons and tsunamis yet their local knowledge from thousands of generations of experience keep them safe. As previously mentioned, in the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean in Dec. 26, 2004, no sea people were drowned simply because they saw the signs beforehand which even local fishermen didn't see. The sea people who once

Photograph of ama diver sculling a boat, from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

lived in and around the coast of Europe, Africa, America and other parts of the world may have had similar intimate knowledge of the sea, but that knowledge has been destroyed.

Thor Heyerdahl and Dr. Alain Bombard have rediscovered some of the secrets of the ancient sea people, but it would be a mistake to think they have worked them all out. There are still sea-people living in South East

Asia but they understandably don't trust outsiders, and the governments of the area are making attempts to 'educate' them and bring them into the modern world. So all their knowledge and ancient ways are in danger of being lost forever.

It means it would be very possible for ancient sea people to cross either deliberately or by accident the biggest ocean in the world. Aboriginals could drift for many months on a raft or canoe all the way from Australia to South America. To populate America it would require some women to be included, and possibly multiple voyages.

There is also the possibility of Aboriginals sailing all the way to America. The Melanesian people who are the same race as the Australian Aboriginals, populate many Pacific islands. So like the Polynesians the Melanesians are capable of sailing and navigating across the Pacific Ocean. If they sailed east past New Zealand they would find themselves within the prevailing winds and ocean currents that go towards South America, in a great circle taking them south in a southerly route to America. The question would be; did they do this 10 – 50 thousand years ago? Many orthodox scientists would dispute this but there is no reason not to think this. We cannot assume that people 50,000 years ago were more stupid than people today. Also if we take the Aquatic Ape theory seriously then we have to accept human beings had knowledge of living in the sea going back millions of years. Some modern scientists are beginning to accept that pre-historic ocean voyages might be possible as we can see from the following article in *Discovery* magazine called; *Did Humans Colonize the World by Boat?*

Research suggests our ancestors traveled the oceans 70,000 years ago. by Heather Pringle. Avalable at. -

http://discovermagazine.com/2008/jun/20-did-humans-colonize-the-world-by-boat

Jon Erlandson shakes out what appears to be a miniature evergreen from a clear ziplock bag and holds it out for me to examine. As one of the world's leading authorities on ancient seafaring, he has devoted much of his career to hunting down hard evidence of ancient human migrations, searching for something most archaeologists long thought a figment: Ice Age mariners. On this drizzly late-fall afternoon in a lab at the University of Oregon in Eugene, the 53-year-old Erlandson looks as pleased as the father of a newborn—and perhaps just as anxious —as he shows me one of his latest prize finds.

The little "tree" in my hand is a dart head fashioned from creamy-brown chert and bristling with tiny barbs designed to lodge in the flesh of marine prey. Erlandson recently collected dozens of these little stemmed points from San Miguel Island, a scrap of land 27 miles off the coast of California. Radiocarbon dating of marine shells and burned twigs at the site shows that humans first landed on San Miguel at least 12,000 years ago, and the dart head in my hand holds clues to the ancestry of those seafarers.

Archaeologists have recovered similar items scattered along the rim of the North Pacific, and some have even been found in coastal Peru and Chile. The oldest appeared 15,600 years ago in coastal Japan. To Erlandson, these miniature trees look like a trail left by mariners who voyaged along the stormy northern coasts of the Pacific Ocean from Japan to the Americas during the last Ice Age. "We haven't published the evidence for this hypothesis yet, and I'm kind of nervous about it," he says. "But we are getting very close."

Until recently most researchers would have dismissed such talk of Ice Age mariners and coastal migrations. Nobody, after all, has ever unearthed an Ice Age boat or happened upon a single clear depiction of an Ice Age dugout or canoe. Nor have archaeologists found many coastal campsites dating back more than 15,000 years. So most scientists believed that Homo sapiens evolved as terrestrial hunters and gatherers and stubbornly remained so, trekking out of their African homeland by foot and spreading around the world by now-vanished land bridges. Only when the Ice Age ended 12,000 to 13,000 years ago and mammoths and other large prey vanished, archaeologists theorized, did humans systematically take up seashore living—eating shellfish, devising fishing gear, and venturing offshore in small boats.

So if Australian Aboriginals managed to settle in America long before anyone else. What happened to them? The standard explanation is that the incoming invaders from Asia simply wiped them out. This certainly happened in Australia where white settlers certainly practiced genocide against the Aboriginals in the 19th century. Yet another explanation is that the incoming invaders assimilated them.

The Aboriginal people of Australia and of Melanesia all practice birth control. The reason is that on islands and in a country like Australia, where food resources are limited, overpopulation would be a disaster. The incoming invaders may not have had the same concerns and continued to breed out of control. The Aboriginals may have been assimilated and overwhelmed by the increasing numbers of the new invaders. It has been speculated that the people of Terra del Fuego, were a mixture of Asian and Aboriginal people. Then there is the problem of the Kennewick man and Penon woman. What were white people doing living in America over 10,000 years ago? This is only a problem if we think of human beings as being landlubbers. It is not a problem if we think of human beings as aquatic. 10,000 years ago there would have been sea-people along the coast of Europe; they would have been far less afraid of the oceans than mariners in more recent times, because they knew how to live on the sea. So sailing across the Atlantic in even very primitive sailing craft would be far less a problem to them than for people at the time of Columbus. This is because by this time, the knowledge of the ancient sea people had been destroyed and forgotten. There is no reason why the sea people of Europe couldn't have discovered America and settled there.

The same is true of the sea-people of Africa. An alternative explanation is that the ancestors of Luzia woman didn't come from Australia but Africa instead. This is because the Australian Aboriginals are similar to some African tribes. It has also been pointed out that between Brazil and the Congo is the shortest distance across the Atlantic, which is not very far from where the Bijago people live with their large ocean going canoes. The point is that the sea-people of Africa, like the sea-people of Europe, would be at home living off the Ocean and therefore long Ocean journeys wouldn't be a problem for them. If this is true it could solve a problem about the Olmec people. In Central America very large carved heads have been discovered. The problem is that these heads do not show the Asiatic features of most Native Americans but show instead the large lips and flattened noses of African people. The Olmec civilization existed between 1500 to 100 BC and predates the Maya civilization; the carvings they left behind of themselves suggest they were African.

Now this is a very controversial point. Were the Africans capable of starting their own civilization? There is evidence that Africans, like any other race, were eminently capable of doing this. In the 19th century European explorers discovered the ancient ruins of a city built of stone called Zimbabwe. The Europeans assumed that another race built it because they didn't think the local Africans could construct a city like this. At first they speculated it was the legendary city of Ophir, the site of King Solomon's mines. This belief resulted in a treasure hunt during which the whole site was dug up in the search for gold. As nothing came of this, it was then assumed that the Phoenician, Greek, or Egyptians must have built it. But no artifacts of other civilizations were discovered on the site, so the only possibility was that Africans built it. Unfortunately the treasure hunters had destroyed the archaeology of the site, but archaeologist Gertrude Caton-Thompson managed to find stone structures outside of the city that hadn't been dug-up by the treasure hunters and this confirmed that the buildings were constructed by Africans,

Large stone structures have also been discovered in Ethiopia and the Sudan, also built by Africans. There is also a controversy about the original Egyptian civilization. European scholars and archaeologists assume that the original Egyptians were white people but many African scholars are contesting this, claiming they were black Africans.

It means that black Africans were more than capable of crossing the Atlantic and constructing cities made of stone. But if that is the case what happened to them? Did the Asiatic Americans also wipe them out? Another explanation could be that they didn't go anywhere and they still live in America. It is known that the South American people are a hybrid race, a mixture of Asian, European, and African peoples, and it is assumed that this mixture only happened after the Spanish and Portuguese conquest. But it could be that this mixture already existed before European settlers and Conquistadors reached America. The Spanish have reported meeting both white and black people when they first conquered South America.

Photograph of either ama or haenyo divers coming out of the surf dragging their equipment. From Japanese web site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Photographs by Fosco Maraini of ama diver, from Japanese web-site. – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Chapter Nine - The Amazons Of The Amazon River

Up until the 1950s the academic world had decided that stories of Amazons by the Greeks and Romans were complete myths. That was until Soviet archaeologists found a skeleton of a young woman, near the River Molochnaya on the north-west coast of the Sea of Azov. Buried with her was a bronze mirror, necklace of glass beads, silver, bronze and glass bracelets. As well as two iron lance blade, a quiver of 20 arrows and a suit of armour. (The armour was of a cloth shirt with small pieces of iron sown to it.) The grave was dated to the third or fourth century BC. Then another grave was found at Kut west of the river Dnieper of a women warrior with also a bronze mirror, glass beads and a quiver of arrows, this grave also had a iron sword in it. More graves have since been discovered in Georgia of female warriors. Most of these finds are north of the Black Sea which in Greek mythology is where the Ancient Greeks said Amazons were. (The Black Sea then was known as the Amazon Sea).

Graves of female warriors have been discovered all over Europe though many are in dispute. This is because it is not always easy to tell if a skeleton is either male or female. In many graves the skeleton is assumed male if it has weapons within it and it is only later when someone looks closely at the skeleton, do question arise if the skeleton might be female. For this reason some archaeologists still won't accept the possibility of Amazons, claiming these skeletons have to be male, as female warriors are an impossibility. In Britain a grave of a female gladiator was even discovered, which many people found very shocking.

The sex of ancient Celtic graves has also caused a lot of controversy, in archaeological circles, because if a grave is obviously of a wealthy person, it is assumed it must be of a male chieftain. Then sometimes feminine items are discovered in the grave and the skeleton is more closely examined it is discovered it is female. Archeologists are now starting to accept that female leadership and female warriors were commonplace in Europe before it was conquered by Rome. This is not only true of the old world but it seems to have been true of America before Europeons subjugated it.

When the Spanish first conquered South America they claimed to have encountered not only black and white people, but Amazon warriors and tribes ruled by women. These stories tend to be dismissed as simply the result of an overactive imagination, but there are good reasons to believe these stories are true.

The first reports of Amazon warriors in America come from Christopher Columbus. On March 4, 1493, Columbus wrote that he had encountered women warriors on the island of Martinique; he also claimed they covered themselves with copper plates and used bows and arrows made of sugar cane. Alfonso Ulloa, who accompanied Columbus on all four of his voyages to the New World, supports this story. He also wrote about the women warriors of Martinique in his book; *Historia del Senor Don Fernando Colombo*. In this book he wrote that the locals claimed that women only populated the island of Martinique. Men from other islands would only come to the island at a certain time of the year to collect boys, and would take them away and bring the boys up.

The Spanish also reported other islands called Las Mujeres, (which means women in Spanish) and Cozumel where again women warriors were seen. Unfortunately these early Caribbean people were all killed, raped and enslaved by the Spanish conquistadors.

Michele de Cuneo wrote in February 1495 that Columbus captured 1,600 Tainos (the name of the original Caribbean people) and put 550 on ships, but 200 died on the return passage. To discourage the Spanish invading their islands for food the Tainos burnt their own crops, resulting in many dying of hunger, unfortunately this still didn't stop the Spanish taking them as slaves. Forced labour, diseases such as measles and smallpox, and famine decimated the native people until only 60,000 Tainos were counted in

1509. When the Tainos tried to fight back, killing a few Spaniards, the revenge by the Spanish was extremely brutal. For instance; when the natives of Higuey and Saona killed eight Spaniards, four hundred troops slaughtered the natives of these islands. The Tainos turned out to be so unsatisfactory as slaves, that the Spanish began to import African slaves in 1505.

The Spanish in California also reported Amazons, unfortunately these reports are very controversial because not only did women rule these tribes, they were also black. When the Spanish first came to California they found two races of people; the Indian people with Asian features, and black Amazons with African features. The Spanish also noted how good they were at swimming and diving and both sexes would do this. They were observed weighing themselves down with stones to make it easier to dive to the bottom. This is what Sponge divers used to do in Greece before modern diving equipment was introduced. They were also seen diving with spears and spearing fish. They were employed by the Spanish as pearl divers.

Up until 1862 the origins of the name California was a mystery, until a scholar discovered a novel written in 1521 by Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo. The book was called; *The Exploits of the Very Powerful Cavalier Esplandian, Son of the Excellent King Amadis of Gaul.* Within this book was the story of Queen Califia, an Amazon Queen. It seems that when the Spanish first began to explore the Northwest coast of America and discovered tribes of black Amazon women they called the area California after this fictional Queen Califia. If that is the case what happened to these people? It seems they didn’t just disappear, because French and English explorers also saw them. It is claimed that disease wiped them out in the 19th century, but there could be other reasons. Certainly, the genocide of native people wasn’t unknown in 19th century America. Yet it is possible that members of these tribes did survive. As black slaves from Africa were imported into America they were confused in the minds of the European settlers with the Native Black people. So they could have been taken by black slavers and become mixed with the black slaves from Africa. As these people had no voice in the white man’s history, there origins were obscured and forgotten.

The Spanish found these black people sailing in ships and were told that they traded with islands far out into the Pacific. This is similar to what was told to the Spanish by the Incas in Peru. An Inca ruler called Tupac took a fleet of balsa rafts. (Similar to the Kon-Tiki raft that Thor Heyerdahl sailed across the Pasific) to the islands of Avachumbi and Ninachumbi. After a year the sailors came back with booty and many black people. (No one knows which of these Pasific islands they were). This story creates an interesting possibility. The black people were probably Melanesians.

There is clear evidence that the Central American Olmec civilization was African. They not only left behind large carvings of heads, weighing between 20-40 tons, but their writing system reflects in many of its symbols the writings used by the Vai people of West Africa. What is more, the later Mayan writing, which comes from the Olmec, when broken down into its constituent parts is analogous to the ancient Libyco-Berber writings of North Africa.

As previously mentions the Bijago People of West Africa had large ocean going canoes that could hold up to 70 people. The Polynesian sailed across the Pacific in similar canoes, so it would be reasonable to assume that Africans could sail to South America in pre-historic times.

On the previous page is photograph by Fosco Maraini, of an ama diver, from his book *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* Note the piece of metal she has tucked in her waistband. This is used to dig out shells from the rocks. The heavy metal also probably acts a weight to allow the ama diver to dive deeper. Also, there has been reports of a few rare shark attacks on ama and haenyo divers, a piece of metal like this would be a very handy weapon to defend yourself from sharks.

The most famous sighting of Amazons in America comes from Francisco de Orellana who was a member of the conquistadors that conquered Peru. In 1541 Orellana was part of a Spanish army, which went to find El Dorado in the Amazon jungle. After a few months they were running out of supplies; Orellana was ordered to build a boat and sail down the river in search of food. He and his men were successful in building the boat but was unsuccessful in finding food, and at their agreed meeting point he missed the main Spanish force. He and his crew then continued down the river until they came to an Indian village that gave them food. They stayed there to build an even larger ship and heard tales about the Coniupuyara, which means “great women” that lived further down the river. After they finished the new ship they drifted further down the river, coming upon more Indian villages, most of which were hostile towards them. Then they arrived at a city set upon platforms in the middle of a clearing. Orellana managed to communicate with friendly natives who told him this was the city of their rulers. They went on to explain that the rulers were called; “the women who live alone” and they ruled over the land. It seems that when the female rulers visited their villages, the people gave them feathers of parrots and macaws, to decorate the roofs of their altars.

After this friendly meeting Orellana continued down the river but when he tried to go ashore again near another large settlement he met fierce resistance. In the ranks of the natives they saw tall, naked white women who seemed to be in charge. The Spanish fired at these Amazons, killing several of them and the attack weakened, allowing the Spanish to make their escape. The story of tall white women at first seems to be very improbable yet reports of white people in pre-Columbian America come from other parts of South America.

The Incas told the Spanish that they were not the first white people they had met. They had mistakenly welcomed the Spanish into their cities thinking they were white Viracocha people, not knowing that the Spanish were only interested in conquest. As previously mentioned archaeologists have confirmed the existence of these white people with the Kennewick man and Penon woman.

It is claimed that these skulls are of the Ainu people of Northern Japan. Unfortunately these people are also very controversial. It seems that the Ainu people were the original inhabitants of Japan until Chinese people invaded it. Since then they have interbred with the Chinese invaders, but originally they were white people. What is more they are a lot taller than the average Chinese and Japanese people. This echoes the Kennewich man who was a tall and strong individual, which is what Oraellana saw; tall and strong white women. But others claim the skulls are European. There is no way of proving which is true though these are now attempts to extract DNA from Penon woman.

After they escaped, Orellana questioned an Indian prisoner about the Amazons. To quote from the book *Women Warlords* by Tim Newark –

As Orellana steered his ships towards the middle of the river, he questioned an Indian prisoner about the Amazon attackers. The Indian admitted he knew about the women because he took them tribute on his chieftain's behalf. His chieftain was called Couvnco and his land was a vassal state of the Amazons, who lived some seven days' journey inland. He also said the women were not married. Orellana wanted to know more. At last, they were nearing El Dorado. Through a language of general Indian words and signs, the prisoner explained all he knew of the land of the Amazons.

"The women were very numerous and dwelled in seventy villages," recorded Fray Gaspar. "Their houses were built of stone and provided with doors. The roads from one village to another were fenced on both sides and guarded at regular intervals so no one could approach without paying toll."

"But who is the father of these women's children?" asked Orellana.

"The women make war against a great lord nearby," replied the Indian, "and bring back warriors as captives and live with them in their villages. When a woman becomes pregnant, the prisoners are sent back to their land. When a son is born, he is killed and his body sent to the father. When a daughter is born, she is cared for and taught the ways of war."

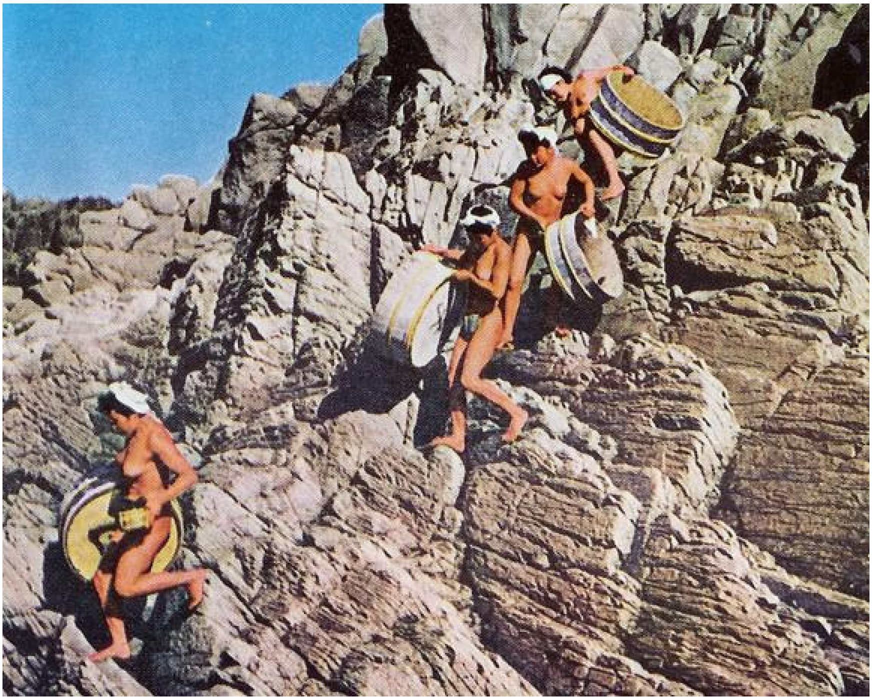
"Who is the lord of these women?"

"They are subject to a female chieftain called Conori," said the Indian. "The Amazons possess great wealth in silver and gold. The household utensils of the most important Amazon women are made of precious metals. They have five great houses or temples dedicated to the sun, containing idols of gold and silver representing the figures of women. Their clothing is made of fine llama wool and it covers their bodies from breast to knee and is sometimes fixed by buttons, sometimes by laces. They have long hair and wear gold crowns two inches in width adorned with coloured designs."

All these details Fray Gasper recorded. It was the high point of Orellana's expedition and the reason why the mighty river was so named.

Orellana continued down the river to the open sea and then managed to sail his two homemade ships back to Spain. He named the river The Amazon after the female warriors who attacked him. He was to mount another expedition to the Amazon but died soon after reaching the river. Without its leader the expedition returned.

Underwater photograph by Fosco Maraini, from, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island,*



Ama divers climbing down to the sea, from Japanese web-site. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/shigoto/shigoto.html

Yet 100 years later when the next European expedition explored the river they found no trace of the fabulous cities reported by Orellana, or the Amazon warriors. As a result Orellana was to be labeled a liar by historians, and his stories of marvelous cities, female rulers and Amazon warriors exaggerated fantasies. This was to be confirmed in more modern time when it was realized that the soil in the rain forests is very poor for growing crops. At present farmers are destroying the Amazon forest by the slash and burn method. They cut down a large area, and then burn it, and plant crops. Yet after a few years the soil is so depleted that crops no longer can be grown. So they have to go on to cut down another area and do the same thing.

For this reason modern experts claimed that an ancient civilisation existing in the Amazon basin was impossible because all civilisations in the past have relied on intensive farming for food. The soil was too poor to feed a civilization. So it seems to be that Orellana was clearly a liar because there was no evidence of any kind to support his stories.

Then very recently archaeologists began to find large earth mounds in the Amazon forests. It occurred to some of them that these mounds might be artificial, so they began to dig in them and quickly found large amounts of pottery and other man made artifacts. Not only this, some of these fragments suggested they came from very large pots, far too large to be carried around by anyone. It means that these mounds were the remains of ancient settlements. As the archaeologists explored further they found ancient roads, (which although were overgrown the natives in the area were still using), linking these mounds, demonstrating the complex infrastructure of an ancient civilisation. If this was so, how did they feed themselves? As previously mentioned, without intensive farming they could not feed a large population.

The archaeologists then noticed the soil in the mounds was very different to the normal soil of the rain forest. It was reasoned that this ancient civilisation must have found a way to fertilize this normally barren soil. Tests were done on the soil and it was discovered to be full of charcoal. What became clear was that this ancient civilisation used the slash and burn method, but instead of burning the vegetation they cooked the wood instead. (This is the method of making charcoal all over the world). The charcoal was then able to retain the nutrients in the wood. Not only that, this charcoal rich soil was full of bacteria, which fed the plants growing in it. Modern scientists have reproduced this method and been greatly impressed by the results. In experimental plots, adding a combination of charcoal and fertilizer into the rain-forest soil boosted yields by 880% compared with fertilizer alone. This has now been hailed as a solution to the world's hunger problem. It seems that this ancient civilisation found solutions to the problems of poor soil that modern science with all its sophisticated chemical fertilizers was unable to find. This soil has been found in many other areas along the Amazon River, with ancient artifacts within it wherever it is found. All these mounds are in the places where Orellana claimed he saw cities and towns.

Although this Amazon civilization did find ways of greatly increasing productivity of the soil it may not have been the only way they fed their population. Orellana didn't claim to see vast areas where the jungle had been cut down and given over to farmland. While the archaeologists have only discovered the charcoal soil in mounds and not in vast areas of the forest. So it doesn't look like they relied on agriculture alone to feed themselves.

Picture of amas climbing down rocks from film *Violated Paradise*
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/capture/ama/capture-ama.htm

Orelana says the towns and cities were built on platforms, while the archaeologist have found the roads of this civilization were also built high. The reason for this is that every year the Amazon River floods, flooding the surrounding forest. This then is why the houses and roads had to be built high, they were built on a flood plain, so they won't be flooded in the wet season. This was probably true of their agriculture land, the fact that the charcoal soil was in mounds, suggests the farmed land was also built high to protect it from flooding. Now this would require a lot of work to do this, suggesting that the agriculture land they used wasn't very large. So they needed other ways of obtaining food.

The very fact that it seems that women were in charge suggests they were also the main breadwinners. Which means the women were diving and gathering food in the river. The Amazon has all the advantages of living on the coast, as it has an abundance of freshwater crustaceans and shellfish, as well as over 3,000 different species of fish. The river is so large that it can accommodate a species of fresh water dolphin. Also in the wet-season it would have vast wetlands that semi-aquatic people would have the knowledge to exploit it. It is true that in the Amazon you do have piranhas, crocodiles and even sharks, but these predators are only a problem in certain areas of the Amazon. The local people would be very aware of when and where it is safe to swim in the river.

So what happened to this ancient civilisation? Scientists can only speculate, but it is known that the Europeans brought with them diseases that were unknown to the native population, like small pox and influenza. Not having any immunity to these diseases the native population was decimated. It means that the Orellana expedition brought to the native population these diseases, which would have wiped out most of them very quickly. The civilisation collapsed and the jungle soon overgrew the cities and town. So by the time the next Europeans came to the same area all they would have seen was virgin jungle.

The problem with this theory is that no civilization has been destroyed by disease alone. Even the Black Death plagues that swept Europe were not enough to destroy European civilization. The two things that have destroyed civilizations in the past have been years of drought and famine or conquest and genocide. We can rule out famine, because the Amazon basin has shown no sign of this for thousands of years. So this only leaves conquest and genocide.

The original expedition that Orellana was a part of was searching for El Dorado, on the strength of native stories. Likewise, the Indian whom he questioned told him that; “The Amazons possess great wealth in silver and gold. The household utensils of the most important Amazon women are made of precious metals. They have five great houses or temples dedicated to the sun, containing idols of gold and silver representing the figures of women”. It was probably this that sealed the Amazon civilization’s fate. The Spanish were gold crazy and would have wanted to find and loot this gold. This is why Orellana came back to the Amazon with another expedition, but he was beaten back by the natives, and the problems of trying to sail against the current of the Amazon River. He himself died and the expedition returned empty handed.

Yet it would be inconceivable that no one else tried to do the same, with reports of gold within this Amazon civilization. So the obvious thing would be that another expedition came back to the Amazon, destroyed the society completely and looted all the gold it had.

If that is the case, why hasn’t it been reported in history? If the Spanish did find gold they wouldn’t want to world to know about this, because they were competing against the Portuguese and the English for gold in the New World.

The Portuguese arrived in Brazil in 1500 and it became a Portuguese colony in 1549. As early as 1530 forests were being chopped down and convert into sugar plantations, while the local Indians were forced to work on these plantations as slaves. So if the Spanish did come back they wouldn't want the Portuguese to know, as this could start a war between the two countries. (Though Spain did conquer Portugal in 1580 in a surprise attack). It would also attract the attention of the English and other European countries. In the same year as Orelana was exploring the Amazon River, a Germanic adventurer Phillip von Hutten was searching for El Dorado near the mouth of the Amazon River. Later on Sir Walter Raleigh in 1595 led an English expedition to the Amazon to also try and find El Dorado. So a secret expedition would be the best idea and the Spanish would be in a better position to do this than any other country. Trying to sail up the Amazon River, against the current, is very difficult, before the invention of motorboats. So the obvious way would be to do exactly what Orelana had done, start off from the other side of the continent, build ships at the source of the Amazon and sail them down the river. It would have to be a far larger expedition, large enough to take on the Amazon led warriors but the Spanish had the advantage of muskets, as well as armour helmets and breastplates that could stop an arrow.

The civilization wasn't completely destroyed because a hundred years later, 1641, the next recorded visit to this area was by a Spanish Priest Cristobal d' Acuna. He never saw the fabulous cities reported by Orelana but he met an Indian tribe called the Guarcaras and traded with the women of this tribe, who seem to be in charge. He was to write about them. –

[Ama diving to the sea floor, from Japanese web-site. http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html]

The Amazons are women of great valour. They have preserved themselves without ordinary intercourse with men. And even when they receive them, once every year, they brandish their bows and arrows at them until they are satisfied that the men come with peaceful intentions. They then drop their weapons and take them to their hammock in their houses and receive the Indians as their guests for a few days. After this the men return to their own country.

Again he repeats what Fray Gasper said that they kill any boys they give birth to and only keep the girls. The very fact he claims that, "the Amazons are women of great valour". Suggests he has information about there fighting skills, perhaps when they have tried to defend their cities against the Spanish. If this Amazon civilization was hit hard by the Spanish looking for gold they then might also be open to attack by patriarchal tribes in the area, after the Spanish had left. In a weakened state the Amazons would be less able to defend themselves, and probably overrun.

What happened to them since then is unknown. The Indians were slowly wiped out, even as late as the 20th century Amazon Indian tribes were being decimated. It was not until 1988 that Brazil recognized constitutionally that the surviving Indians had rights. (Which in practice means it now became a crime to shoot Indians).

The charcoal soil called preta soil is now seen as a way of combating world poverty and global warming. To quote *Discover* magazine at. – http://discovermagazine.com/2007/apr/black-gold-of-the-amazon/article_view?b_start:int=0&-C=

A few years of Amazonian rains will wash away the nutrient-laden ash from land that was cleared by slash-and-burn techniques, but the charcoal in the terra preta soils persists. The terra preta soils at the Central Amazon Project goes back in many places as much as 2,500 years. Creating new terra preta in the Amazon today would have several advantages, Lehmann says. First, because the enriched soil remains fertile for a long time, its use would discourage farmers from moving on and burning more forest to open up new fields. Second, because of the added charcoal, terra preta holds up to 10 times as much carbon as unaltered soils. The late Wim Sombroek—a legendary soil scientist whose long interest in terra preta earned him the epithet "the godfather of dark earth"—began to wonder if dark earth could be used to sequester carbon. Lehmann's studies have shown that it can: Fifty percent of the original carbon in plants and trees used to make biochar remains in the terra preta soils after the conversion.

What does this mean for fighting global warming? Brazil is the world's eighth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, and most of those emissions come not from industry and cars but from loggers, ranchers, and farmers burning the forest. Just substituting slash-and-char for slash-and-burn could reduce human-produced carbon emissions in the Amazon by 12 percent.

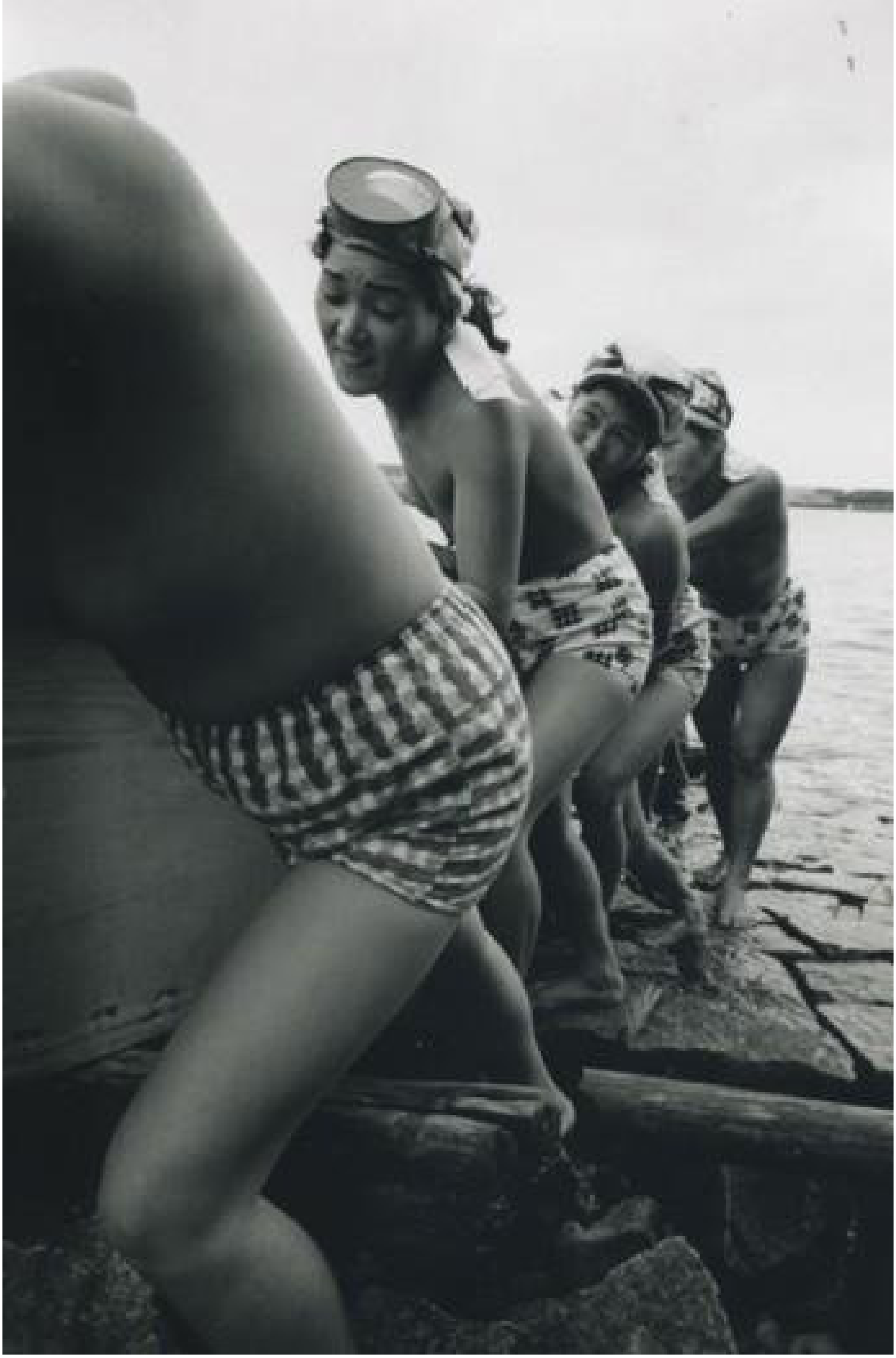
Even better, burning agricultural wastes in a controlled process called pyrolysis can convert wood and other organic waste into useful volatile gases, heat, electricity, and bio-oil. The process is win-win: Burning the biomass produces substantial amounts of rich biochar from waste material like peanut shells and rice husks, and mixing this biochar into soil could more than offset the carbon that is emitted into the atmosphere—not only during the burning process itself, but also when the derived fuels are used.

"You wouldn't just be carbon neutral, you would be carbon negative, drawing carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, producing energy and improving the climate in the process," Lehmann says. Through workshops with other scientists, he is trying to spread the gospel about terra preta worldwide, carrying on where Petersen left off.

James Petersen was an American archaeologist who was murdered by a local criminal. He had promoted the use of terra preta before he was killed. To quote the *Discover* magazine web-site again. –

Over the past decade, Petersen, Neves, and their band of archaeologists had become local heroes, earning the appreciation of the surrounding community during seasonal digs conducted on the peninsula that separates the Rio Negro and Amazon rivers. At more than 100 sites across the peninsula, Petersen and his colleagues had unearthed evidence of early civilizations that were far more advanced, far more broadly connected, and far more densely occupied than that of the small bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers previously hypothesized for the region. Before the Europeans arrived, this peninsula in the heart of the Amazon was home to communities with roads, irrigation, agriculture, soil management, ceramics, and extended trade. These civilizations, Neves says, were as complex as the southwestern Native American cultures that inhabited Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde. But due to the scarcity of stone in the Amazon, the people built with wood, and over time the structures disintegrated, leaving little evidence of the culture.

Picture of amas jumping off boat into the sea.
From the Japanese web-site *Violated Paradise*
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/capture/ama/capture-ama.htm



Ama divers pulling boat out of the water. From Japanese web site. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Ama diver foraging on the sea floor. Photograph Fosco Maraini, from. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Chapter Ten - The True Nature Of Early Humans

If the landlubber theory has problems with the way humans first reached America it has even greater problems about the way they first reached Australia.

It is estimated that the first humans reached Australia 40-60 thousand years ago. The big problem is that there is water between Australia and Asia. This difficulty seems to have been solved when it was discovered that during the last Ice Age sea levels were a lot lower than they are today. At this time most of Indonesia was joined to Asia and Australia was joined to New Guinea, so the solution seems simple; the original Aborigines could walk from Asia to Australia. The problem is that even during the Ice Age there was still open water between the nearest Indonesian island and New Guinea.

The landlubber theorist cannot get away with saying it happened by accident, with a man and woman reaching Australia floating on a log. This would show up on the genetic code of the Australian Aboriginals, as geneticists would be able to tell if all the Aboriginals in Australia were descended from just a few people. It was a proper invasion of many people. They would have to have had seaworthy sailing raft to do this.

This is because it couldn't have been just a one-way trip. People are very unlikely to take all their family and children to an unknown land. Someone had to have discovered it first, and then traveled back to tell the tribe what they had discovered. Then others would sail across. Perhaps they might have over fished the seafood in their area and wanted to harvest an untouched new place. In time the tribe would set up camp in this new world and finally begin to live there permanently. This would mean the Aboriginals would need to have reasonability seaworthy craft about 50,000 years ago. Most scientists have now accepted this, and no one is seriously disputing it. But now there is an even bigger problem for the landlubber theory. It could be that human beings were building watercraft as long as 900,000 years ago.

One of the early species of human to be discovered was in Java, called Java man. It was Homo erectus. Other finds of the same species have been discovered in China and Africa. The big problem is that bones of Homo erectus along with stone tools have been discovered on the island of Flores. This island is part of the Indonesian archipelago but it is separated from other islands by a deep channel called the Lombok Strait. Even in an Ice Age, when the sea level has dropped, any human has to cross water to get there. At first this wasn't seen as too big a problem, since it was theorized that a small number of Stone Age folk accidentally drifted as far as Flores after climbing onto thick mats of vegetation that sometimes form near the Southeast Asian coast. That seemed reasonable until local fishermen were consulted. They told of the Lombok Strait's fiendishly shifting currents, vicious whirlpools, and unexpected waves far from shore. It seems with the strong current going through the strait it would be difficult if not impossible to drift across it.

One man, Robert G. Bednarik, decided to build a primitive craft and test what was needed to get across the strait. He made a bamboo raft out of local material using stone tools, then with a crew set off across the strait. It took him 12 hours, to cover a distance of 30 miles; and they had to paddle hard all the way to overcome the effects of the current. This suggests that it was very unlikely that Homo erectus got to Flores by accident but had to have a seaworthy watercraft and work very hard to get there. A raft is not an easy thing to paddle, but then their bones suggested that Homo erectus were stronger individuals than modern human beings. It is also a possibility that Homo erectus managed to swim across, because swimming 30 miles is not impossible for modern people. There is no-way of knowing just how aquatic Homo erectus was, because their bones tell us very little about this. They would certainly need to be very strong swimmers to overcome the strong currents of the strait.

It is of interest that an extinct member of the elephant family, stegodon, was also found on Flores. It is known that elephants are strong swimmers so if a elephant can swim across this channel then Homo erectus would be more than likely be able to do the same.

Even more controversial than this, is the possibility that Homo erectus made it all the way to Australia. Skeletons found in Kow Swamp, in northern Victoria, show features both of modern humans and Homo erectus.

This suggests that Homo erectus got to Australia and there, evolved into modern humans. Unfortunately, this goes against the, "Out of Africa" theory that claims that modern humans evolved in Africa. So these finds go against not only the landlubber version of human evolution but the out of Africa version as well, and for this reason these finds tend to be ignored by scientists outside of Australia.

Another problem is that the bones from Kow Swamp are dated to between 13,000 and 9,000 years ago, but there are skeletons of modern humans found in Australia from the same date, which suggests there were once two different species of humans living in Australia. This is similar to what happened in Europe where modern humans were once living alongside Neanderthals. What is interesting about this, is that both the Neanderthals and the Kow Swamp people were far more robust and stronger individuals than modern people.

If you watch sport or action adventure movies you might be forgiven for thinking that men are really strong creatures. Well I'm afraid to tell all you "macho" guys out there, but compared for size and weight the human animal is just about the weakest animal in the world. Arnold Schwarzenegger is a weakling compared with an average adult chimpanzee.

In most animals it seems that the males fight over the right to mate with the females. We see this clearly in animals like cattle and deer where males head butt each other until the weakest male backs down and the strongest mates with the females. We also see the same behaviour among cats and dogs and other carnivorous animals, where it is the strongest and most aggressive male who is more likely to pass on their genes.

The advantage of this according to Darwin's theory of evolution is that the strongest and fittest males will mate and pass down their genes to the next generation. Weaker males are eliminated from the gene pool of any species. This seems to work very well with many species of animal but there are exceptions, like human beings and bonobos.

What is remarkable about us, as a species of animal, is how weak we are. An average male chimpanzee is about three times as strong as the average man, even though he is smaller in stature, while the gorilla has about four times the strength of humans. This is also true of any other animal of about our size. A deer, dog or big cat of about the same weight as a human can run 3 to 5 times faster than the average human. One blow from a big cat or large ape will kill even a very strong man.

So why has the human become so weak compared with other animals of an equal size? Does this suggest that sometime during human evolution, the need for males to compete with each other to mate no longer became important for the survival of the species? This can be seen clearly in the relationship between Neanderthals and the first modern Humans over 40 thousand years ago in Europe. The skeletons of the Neanderthals showed they were far stronger and more heavily built than modern Humans living at

Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island* of two amas and a baby. Open nudity was once commonplace in ama communities for both men and women, but the attitude of Western tourists has changed all that.

that time. Both species had about the same sized brains and both used tools. Yet it was the Neanderthals that became extinct and not the physically weaker modern Humans. So it seems that the increased intelligence and tool making ability of Humans made the need for physical strength no longer an important aspect of survival.

The relationship between the Neanderthal and the first modern humans we can see in two species of chimpanzees today. The Congo River in Africa is one of the largest rivers in the World and is in some places over 10 miles wide. The result of this is that the chimpanzees living on different sides of the Congo River have evolved into two different species. Living on one bank is the normal chimpanzee you see in other parts of Africa but on the other bank is the bonobo. This is more lightly built than the heavier and stronger common chimpanzee.

Bonobo males, like humans, do not compete with each other through fighting for the right to mate with females. This is what makes both species physically weaker than chimpanzees and other animals of a similar size.

It is a curious fact that in the entire Lemur species on the island of Madagascar the female is the dominant sex. It has been observed many times by biologists, that if a male lemur approaches a female before she has finished feeding, he is swiftly put in his place. Female lemurs drive males away from food until they and their young have eaten and will even jump at them, bite or cuff them. The males then retreat and give submissive calls.

Unlike with bonobos, a powerful lesbian sisterhood does not reinforce this behaviour. It seems to be a part of the male Lemur's genetic instinct. It has also been observed that when adult males begin issuing submissive signals to adolescent females, the young females are taken by surprise. After a while they figure out what's going on and exploit it for their own advantage.

The theory put forward by the biologists observing this behaviour is that it is caused by the extreme weather conditions on Madagascar, which makes it very tough for the wild life living there. During four months of the year, the island experiences torrential downpours that nourish the lemurs' food supplies of leaves and fruits. The other eight months of the year tend to be cold and dry. During these dry spells, lemurs rely on low quality foods like bamboo pith. Overall, survival is very difficult, more so for the female, than the male. Pregnancy and providing milk for infants require energy. So Lemurs cannot afford the luxury of males assaulting females, pinching their food or even feeding before the female and her young. This means that having males who are very submissive towards female is a very important consideration for the survival of the species. Lemur groups with alpha males would quickly die out because only the males would survive. This is because they would hog the scanty supply of food in the dry months, and the female and young would be the first to die. In female- dominated groups, even if only one male survives a bad year, he is still able to fertilize all the females. So survival pressures have made Lemurs on Madagascar matriarchal.

Scientists now believe that the Neanderthals died out because of the changing climate of Europe at the time of their extinction. But the mystery is why it was the Neanderthals that died out and not the first modern humans? The bones of Neanderthals show they were physically far stronger than humans. This suggests this greater strength was brought about in evolutionary terms by Neanderthals males fighting each other, in a test of strength for the right to mate, with only the strongest males reproducing. This made the species far stronger than humans. Because of their weaker body strength, it shows that male humans were not fighting each other for dominance and the right to mate. If we assume that the physically powerful Neanderthal had a similar society to present day chimpanzees, then females being at the bottom of the pecking order would have to always give way to males in disputes over food. This wouldn't be a problem when they had food in abundance. Yet we know during the ice age food became very difficult to obtain at certain times of rapid climate change. So it would only be the alpha males who were allowed to feed and survive. The females and their children, being at the bottom of the pecking order, would be the first to die, and even if some females survived they would be so undernourished that they would be unlikely to be able to give birth and feed their young. This means that in times of scarcity the evolutionary strategy of only allowing the strongest and most aggressive males to breed would work against the Neanderthals. Although the alpha males would survive, as they would hog all the food available, without females they would be incapable of breeding a new generation.

On the other hand, the weaker modern humans didn't use this evolutionary strategy. Their weak and slight bodies suggest they would be more like the bonobos with females at the top of the pecking order. It would then be more likely that the alpha females would survive in times of scarcity. The deaths of the lower order males wouldn't be such a problem because it would only require a few males to survive to continue the breeding of the species. One male can father hundreds of children by different mothers. It wouldn't even matter if the male died after he had done his job of fertilizing the females, as the caring of the children he fathered would be in the hands of the mothers.

This then means that in the changing climactic conditions, which brought about the extinction of the Neanderthals, it would be humans within a matriarchal society that would be more likely to survive.

It is true that in recorded history we have lived in a patriarchal society and this may have come about because of agriculture and the abundance of food that this created. While humans lived in conditions where survival was difficult, it would mean that matriarchal tribes would be the ones who survived and continued to breed. Certainly the Ice Age and the changing weather conditions made survival for all animals difficult. Then once the Ice Age had ended and the climate settled down into a stable pattern, human intelligence found ways to acquire an abundance of food. People began to grow crops and herd animals. Then the advantages of living in a matriarchal society for survival declined. This would allow patriarchal tribes ruled by alpha males to be created. They in turn made war on their more peaceful matriarchal neighbours who would be defenceless against organized male violence. In these condition, abundance of food no longer gave matriarchal communities the advantage and put females on the lower end of the pecking order, as patriarchy would no longer be a threat to the survival of the tribe. This allowed men to indulge in their favourite pastime of war with other tribes, and so over a few thousand years the whole world would become patriarchal through this violence and warfare

The study of bonobos gives support to the work of Mariji Gimbutas. It also gives a reason why Neanderthals became extinct and not our ancestors

Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from Japanese web-site – http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html
Showing Ama Divers who have climbed down the side of a cliff in bare feet with their heavy wooden tubs and were now about to put them in the water to start work diving. First having to carry them across the slippery rocks and heavy surf.

Photograph Fosco Maraini, from Japanese web-site. –
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html
Showing ama pushing the wooden tubes out to sea before they begin diving.

Chapter Eleven - His-Story And Her-Story

In our politically correct world, the only people who appear to get away with sexist behaviour are Paleontologists, Anthropologists, Archaeologists and Historians. They are still able to refer to the whole of the human species as 'man', and totally ignore women. Even in science programs on TV they are able to give out their scientific theories as facts, only mention men and barely mention the contribution women have made.

It is not for nothing that feminists refer to history as his-story. There is a strong male bias in history and all the theories of prehistory. It would be hard for this to be otherwise, if you examine his-story.

His-story starts off about 5-6 million years ago with an ancestor very much like the modern day chimpanzee. In wildlife programmes that inform the public on the latest scientific research, the bonobo is hardly mentioned, but we receive a lot of information about chimpanzees, as they live in male-dominated communities. It has been discovered that chimpanzees hunt and kill smaller primates for food, so the impression is given that chimpanzee are carnivores. It is also emphasized that male chimpanzees fight wars with each other. This is a controversial point among Primatologists. Most of this behaviour was observed at Gombe National Park. Back in 1960 when Jane Goodall began to observe chimpanzees at Gombe, she found no evidence of extreme violent behaviour by the male chimpanzees. It is true she saw male chimpanzees charge and threaten each other, but she saw little evidence of actual violence. Yet as time went on, the behaviour of the males became more and more violent. It seems that when Jane Goodall first came to Gombe there were few humans living in the same area. But over time human habitation ended up completely surrounding the park. In addition, chimpanzees came to be regarded as, 'bushmeat' and many were hunted for food.

Other primatologists in other parts of Africa have claimed that they haven't observed the extreme violent behaviour of chimps that is now commonplace at Gombe. It has been suggested that the stress of human beings encroaching on the chimpanzee's territory, and the fact of being hunted for meat is making these chimpanzees very violent. The problem is that for filmmakers, chimpanzees getting on well with each other are boring; they prefer the drama of chimpanzees that hunt and fight each other. So films of the stressed -out chimps at Gombe makes far more 'interesting' viewing. The problem is that if the public is told that the chimp is like our distant ancestor, and its behaviour is only shown at Gombe, then it justifies the notion that humans are naturally violent. Also, ignoring the behaviour of the bonobo gives the public the idea that male dominance is also 'natural' for human beings. To explain how this chimpanzee-like ancestor evolved into a man, we are presented with the mighty hunter theory. The general public never gets to hear about the dispute surrounding this theory so the idea stays intact of the killer ape that became more intelligent than other apes through his hunting skills. In all these theories women are hardly mentioned at all.

When humans first arrived in America, at the official date of 12 thousand years ago, many of the large animals that lived there, like elephants, camels, horses, giant beavers, sabre toothed cats etc, all became extinct. So it was immediately assumed it was man who caused this. We had stories of man the big game hunter, killing mammoths and causing mass exstinction. A similar extinction went on in Europe, Siberia and Australia so again man was blamed. This confirmed the killer ape thesis; man the mighty hunter brought about mass extinctions in America, Europe, Northern Asia and Australia. The problem was that this didn't happen in Africa where man first evolved. After all it was where man first learnt his hunting skills, on the African savannah, so why didn't men cause mass extinctions in Africa as well? It could be that there was another reason why the animals become extinct.

In more recent times, as scientists have found out more about what happened during the last Ice Age and it has been realized, that these mass extinctions were more likely to happen through rapid climate change. As a result, men hardly get a mention in some of the latest research into the mass extinctions of the last Ice Age.

Then there is the extinction of Neanderthal man. It was known that modern man and Neanderthal man lived in Europe at the same time. So if Neanderthal man became extinct, then it must have been man the killer ape that did this. So we are presented with the drama of a brutal fight to the death between the two humanoid species with modern man coming out on top. The problem is, there is no real evidence for this, and again it has been realized that the Neanderthals also became extinct at a time of rapid climate change. So it seems that humans were able to survive these changing conditions but the Neanderthals didn't.

Then suddenly man became civilized about five thousand years ago. He changed suddenly from a brutish cave man and created sophisticated civilizations, like ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, overnight. The fact that the first civilizations happened during the Neolithic age is hardly mentioned. Since then we have had recorded history, but even in this, women still hardly get a mention. Everything worthwhile throughout his-story has been created and invented by man; with women are only good for looking after children.

So that is his-story, created by male academics. What we very rarely hear is her-story, unless you read feminist literature. Many academic feminists like Marija Gimbutas, Elaine Morgan, Merlin Stone and Barbara Walker have attempted to tell her-story but this is regarded as being a minority subject.

Her-story like his-story starts 5-6 million years ago, when the ancestor of human beings is a bonobo- like creature. This ape lives in female-dominated societies like the present day bonobo. It is able to defuse aggression and violence through sexual behaviour, and the women stick together in a powerful sisterhood. Like the bonobo, it lives near rivers and lakes and forages in water for food. This seems to be the behaviour of the Australopithecus, one of our ancestors, which lived in an environment like the present-day bonobo's. This ape found that it could escape from predators by climbing trees or wading into water, but of the two, wading was much more unproblematic. Running into the water, for pregnant females or ones carrying small children would be easier than climbing trees. This is similar behaviour to the hippopotamus, which in spite of its large size doesn't feel safe out of the water and can be a dangerous animal if you get between it and water.

It is true some rivers have crocodiles in them but this is not true of all rivers in Africa. Surprisingly, not all species of river crocodiles are dangerous to humans. After a while, some of these apes will follow the river down to the sea and begin foraging on the seashore. Through millions of years of evolutionary time these apes will become more and more aquatic. Living both in wetlands and on beaches.

Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island,* of an ama diver sculling an ama boat out to sea

There will be times when they will over- fish the shallows and have to venture further out to find seafood. This will force them to duck their heads below the surface to reach food deeper than they can normally reach with their arms. In time this behaviour will result in these apes learning to dive below the surface of the water and to swim further out.

Even in tropical waters it is possible to get cold spending too long in the water, so apes with body fat around them will have the advantage of being able to forage longer in the water. Fur will become a drag while swimming, so apes with less fur will swim better. So evolutionary pressure will favour apes with less fur and more body fat. As females will find the water a safer environment than males, it may cause a division of labour, where females forage in the sea or rivers and males forage on land. This will be why females are more aquatic than males.

It seems that this ape thrived, living in the sea. From the sea it was getting the brain food to develop its brain. Wading most of the time forced it to learn how to walk on two legs all the time. As the females became more aquatic and learnt how to swim out beyond their depth, it was possible for them to collect more food than the males foraging on land. These apes living on the coast would need a supply of fresh water and where there wasn't a nearby river this could be provided by coconut milk.

With the increase in brain size this ape began to use its brain. Early tool use probably came with breaking open shellfish and coconuts with a club or stone. Woman divers, in digging out shellfish from rocks underwater, would use digging sticks. An early method of catching fish came with using fish traps. These early humans would already find fish trapped in pools left by the outgoing tide. So to increase production they would dig bigger pools and block any channel that allowed the water to drain away in the outgoing tide and allow the fish to escape. In Australia, purpose built fish traps have been discovered, built by Aborigines and constructed with rocks. They also may have started to learn how to construct crude shelters.

Rafts were probably the first sea craft constructed. These would be very helpful for women divers, not only as a platform from which to dive but somewhere to put the food they are collecting from the sea. They might have been used to paddle out to offshore islands to find more food; if they over fished the areas they were living in.

One of the mysteries of understanding the way modern humans emerged out of Africa is explaining how they got to Australia before the first humans reached Europe, which is a lot closer. It has been suggested that modern humans took: "the scenic route out of Africa". In other words, they followed the coastline all the way from Africa to Australia. For this to happen it suggests that the human population was thriving and expanding by living on the coast. Some may have moved inland and halted the process of becoming aquatic, because they still bred with coastal peoples. This would slow down the rate at which the race developed aquatic features.

On the other hand, an increase in population would also force some humans further out to sea. This is because the shallows would be in danger of being over fished, forcing women to make rafts and dive in deeper and deeper waters. In going out further from land, they would have to learn the art of seawomanship, as there would be times when wind and currents take them out of sight of land, and they had to find their way back. In so doing they will find islands beyond what they can see on the horizon. We know the art of seawomanship would have been learned as far back as 50,000 years ago, because modern humans had to be able to sail beyond the horizon to reach Australia.

Rafts are not the best way to paddle along and therefore there would be pressure to invent something better, either creating a primitive form of sail or learning to hollow out logs to make dugout canoes. Sometimes logs rot from the inside so by cleaning out the rotten wood a crude canoe can be created. This may be how the first dugout canoes were produced.

At this time women would be the dominant sex; this is because on the coast women, being more aquatic than men, would provide the bulk of the food for the tribe. So women would have a higher status than men, and perhaps like in haenyo communities of recent times, men looked after the children on land while the women worked in the sea. Even when some humans began to live inland, and adopted the gatherer/hunter lifestyle, women were still the main breadwinners. All over the world Stone Age people seem to adopt the roles of women gathering food and men hunting. (Though this is not always true; anthropologists have observed Stone Age communities where women do the hunting). Although in his-story the role of hunting is greatly emphasised, in the tropics hunting by men is not very efficient. Even when they invented sophisticated weapons like the bow and arrow, the woomera spear thrower and the boomerang, most hunts end up unsuccessful. Then the tribe is totally reliant on gathering by women for reliable and sustainable food. In many cases it seems that the hunting is more a sport for the men. In tribes in Africa men don’t have a lot to do, women gather the food, look after the children and build the huts. So men spend their time hunting or making war on other tribes.

This changed when humans began to venture north to the colder climates of northern Europe and Asia. In the cold winters there was little food to gather and the tribe became dependant on what food the men could hunt. This increased the status of men within the tribe, a factor that was to later change the course of human history.

This is probably what happened to the Neanderthals. It seems that they lived in a cold climate and survived mostly through hunting. Men became the dominant sex in Neanderthal society. This is confirmed by the robust nature of their skeletons, which showed them to be far stronger physically than modern humans, even though they were smaller in stature.

Their strong build happened because the males competed with each other for sexual access to females and only the strongest males were allowed to mate.

The Neanderthal's smaller size suggested that they weren't being fed as well as the modern humans that also invaded Europe. Or perhaps the Neanderthal children were not being fed properly. If women were at the bottom of the pecking order of Neanderthal society, then they would find it difficult to feed their children properly. They would only feed when the men had sated their appetite, so the children having less food, were very unlikely to grow to full height.

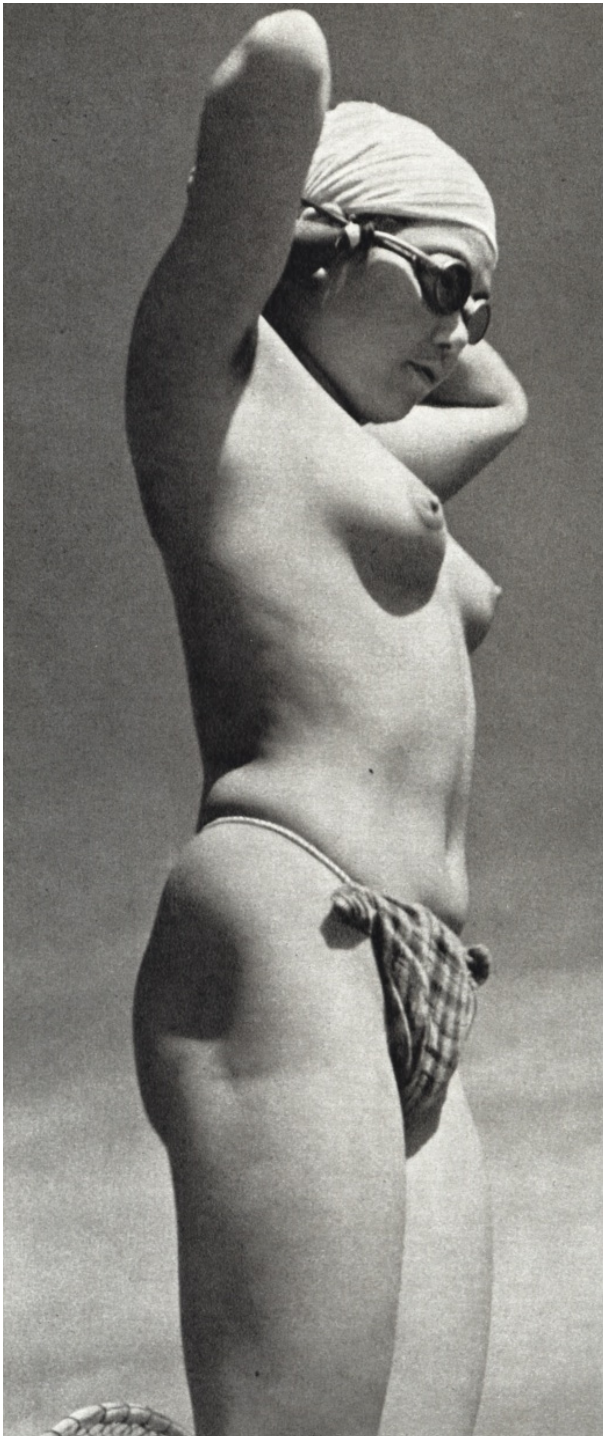
Human civilization started in the Neolithic age, going back 10,000 years, though it could have started even before this. It was probably women who started civilizations because being the gatherers of the tribe; it would be they who began to plant the seeds that they gathered. What archaeologists have discovered is that these first civilizations were completely peaceful. They found no evidence of weapons of war, fortifications or images of violence. They also worshipped goddesses. No one knows when religion got started, but when human beings began to think of a great intelligence that created the world, they first assumed that it must be female, because the whole of human and animal life is created within the bodies of mothers. So they believed in a deity called the Great Mother who gave birth to the whole world. We find that ancient Neolithic civilizations created many feminine images of Goddesses.

Then about 5,000 years ago there was a big change. Warlike patriarchal tribes from the North conquered these peaceful matriarchal civilizations. Having no weapons or even any desire to fight, these civilizations were easily conquered. In the place of the Great Mother, the men introduced male warrior gods. This was the beginning of the patriarchal age, where men began to rule instead of women.

It seems that the patriarchal society took a long time to take root in human society. At first it would only be the rulers who were patriarchal, while the ordinary people followed their ancient matriarchal customs. Even the rulers were not immune to the influences of the female. In early his-story, marriage was unknown, so men had no way of knowing who their children were. This means that the powerful families who ruled early patriarchal civilizations still had to pass power and wealth down the female line. In ancient Egypt, for a man to become a Pharaoh, he had to marry his sister and in one case the Pharaoh had to marry his mother!

This problem was finally overcome with the introduction of patriarchal style marriage, where the wife was forced to remain 'faithful' only to her husband. In many societies, a woman could be executed if she had sex with another man besides her husband. Even today, in some Islamic countries, there are 'honour' killings where a husband has a 'moral' right to kill his wife if she is unfaithful to him, or even just disobey him. Though the husband still had the right to have sex with other women.

It seems that the last stronghold of matriarchy was the sea-people, who still followed their ancient practices because women remained the main breadwinner in these communities. Those that remain are a living link to our past, when women were important, revered and crucial to the well being of any society. We have forgotten that society can be anything other than male-centred, and in so doing, have lost sight of how peaceful, loving and cooperative a female led community can be. Mermaids point us towards our past, when we lived near water and adapted ourselves to it over millennia. They show us the strength and intelligence of women divers; their capacity to cull food from the sea. But they can also hint at the future, when capable, wise and matriarchal women could solve the problems of our male-dominated, violent and rapacious world.



Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island.* Showing a Ama preparing herself to dive.

Appendix One

I have included a chapter from a book from the Victoria age where the author claims to have met aquatic natives in New Guinea. Unfortunately I haven't found any collaborating evidence for this, so it is hard to claim any certainty for its truthfulness.

Wanderings Among South Sea Savages and in Borneo and the Philippines
by H. Wilfrid Walker
CHAPTER 11. Our Discovery of Flat-Footed Lake Dwellers.

Many were the wild and fantastic rumours we had heard at the Residency at Cape Nelson, on the north-east coast of British New Guinea, concerning a curious tribe of natives whose feet were reported to be webbed like those of a duck, and who lived in a swamp a short way in the interior, some distance to the north of us. I myself had at first been inclined to sneer at these reports, but Monckton, the Resident Magistrate, with his superior knowledge of the Papuans, as the natives of New Guinea are called, was sure that there was some truth in the reports, as the Papuan who has not come much in contact with the white man is singularly truthful though guilty of exaggeration.

I knew this, but I had in mind the case of the Doriri tribe, who lived in the interior a little to the south of us. These Doriri (who had had the kindly forethought to send us word that they were coming down to pay us a visit to eat us, for the Papuan, though a savage, is often most suave and courteous and by no means lacking in humour), were reported to us as having many tails, but needless to say when we made some prisoners, we were scarcely disappointed to find that the said tails protruded from the back of the head (in much the same fashion as the Chinaman's pigtail); in this case each man had many tails, which were fashioned by rolling layers of bark from a certain tree - closely allied, I believe to the "paper tree" of Australia - round long strands of hair.

We three white men had many a long talk as to whether these swamp-dwellers were worth going in search of, but I soon came round to Monckton's way of thinking. Acland, alone, however, maintained to the last that the whole thing was a myth, and jokingly said to Monckton: "When you find these duck-footed people, you had better see that Walker does not take them for birds, and shoot and skin a couple of specimens of each sex and add them to his collection." (For my chief hobby in this and many other countries all over the world consisted in adding to my fine collections of birds and butterflies in the old country.)

As we three, with our twenty-five native police and four servant boys, rowed up the Barigi River in our large government whaleboat, on our way to search for these "duck-footed" people, I could not help being struck with the very great beauty of the scene. Giant trees laden with their burden of orchids, parasites and dangling lianas, surrounded us on both sides, their wide-spreading branches forming a leafy arcade far over our heads, while palms in infinite variety, intermixed with all sorts of tropical forms of vegetation, and rare ferns, grew thickly on the banks.

Some distance behind us came our large fleet of canoes, bearing our bags of rice and over one hundred carriers, and as they paddled down the dark green oily waters of this natural arcade, with much shouting and the splashing of many paddles, it made a scene which is with me yet and is never to be forgotten. As we proceeded, the river got more narrow, and fallen trees from time to time obstructed our way. We at length landed at a spot where we were met by a large number of the Baruga tribe, who brought us several live pigs tied to poles, and great quantities of sago, plantains and yams. They had expected us, as we had camped in their country the previous night. They had been "licked" into friendliness by Monckton, who less than a year ago (as elsewhere mentioned) had sunk their canoes, and together with the aid of the crocodiles, which swarm in this river, had annihilated a large force of them. And now to show their friendliness they were prepared to do us a good turn, by helping us to find these duck-footed people, with whom (they told us) they were well acquainted.

Oyogoba, the chief of the Baruga tribe, came to meet us. He assured us of the friendliness of his people, and himself offered to accompany us. His arm had been broken in the encounter with Monckton and his police, and Monckton had immediately afterwards set it himself. It now seemed quite sound. We soon resumed our journey, on foot, passing through very varied country, plains covered with tall grass and bounded by forest, through which at times we passed. At other times we had to force our way through thick swamps in which the sago-palm abounded, from the trunks of which the natives extract sago in great quantities. About mid-day we arrived at a fair-sized village belonging to the Baruga tribe. It was surrounded by a tall stockade of poles, and as we entered it, the women sitting in their huts greeted us with their incessant cries of "orakaiba, orakaiba" (peace). On this account the natives of this part of New Guinea are generally termed "Orakaibas" by other tribes. The houses here seemed larger and better built than most Papuan houses that I had hitherto seen, and there were many curious tree-houses high up among the branches of some very large, trees in the village, some being fully eighty feet from the ground. They had broad ladders reaching up to them, and looked very curious and picturesque. These ladders are made of long rattans from various climbing palms. These rattans, of which there were three double strings, are twisted in such a way as to support the pieces of wood which form the steps. In one case a ladder led from the ground in the usual way to a house built in a small tree about thirty feet from the ground, but a second ladder connected this house with another one in a much larger tree about eighty feet off the ground. I climbed the first ladder, but the second one swayed too much.

These tree-houses axe built partly as look-out houses, from which the approach of the enemy is discovered, and partly as vantage points from which the natives hurl down spears at their opponents below when attacked. Resuming our journey, after a brief halt in this village, we soon came to the Barigi River again, which we crossed, camping in a small deserted village close by. Here I noticed several more tree-houses in the larger trees. This had been a very hot day, even for New Guinea, and I could not resist taking a most refreshing bathe in the river, though I must confess I was glad to get out again, having rather a dread of the crocodiles, which infest parts of this river, though they were not nearly so numerous up here as in the lower reaches of the river which we had traversed in the morning. We were up the following morning before sunrise, and were all much excited at the prospect before us of discovering this curious tribe. This day would show whether or no our journey was to prove fruitless. Soon after leaving the village we entered a dense forest, the growth of which was wonderfully beautiful. Tall PANDANUS trees, some of them supported by a hundred and more long stilted roots, which rose many feet above our heads, reared their crowns of ribbon-like leaves above even some of the giants of the forest. Palms of all shapes and sizes, dwarfed, tall, slender and thick, surrounded us on every side, and at least three different species of climbing palms scrambled over the tallest trees. The tree trunks were hidden by climbing ferns and by a white variegated fleshy-leafed POTHOS. Orchids, though not numerous, were by no means scarce on the branches of some of the larger trees, and were intermixed with many curious and beautiful ferns. There were many large-leafed tropical plants somewhat resembling the HELICONIAS and MARANTAS of tropical America. Flowers were not very plentiful, but here and there the forest would be literally ablaze with what is said to be the most showy flowering creeper in the world, huge bunches of large flowers of so vivid a scarlet that Monckton and I agreed no painting could do them justice. It is sometimes known as the DALBERTIA, but its botanical name is MUCUNA BENNETTI. It has been found impossible to introduce it into cultivation. Among other flowers were some very large sweet-scented CRINUM lilies and some very pretty pink flowering BEGONIAS, with their leaves beautifully mottled with silver. Here and there we would notice a variegated CROTON or pink-leafed DRACAENA, but these were uncommon. As we proceeded, I noticed that in spite of the very dry weather we had been having, the ground each moment became more moist, which indicated that we were approaching the swamps we had heard about. It was a rough track over fallen trees and dry streams, but before long we passed along the banks of a creek full of stagnant water. We at length left the forest and found ourselves in open country, covered with reeds and rank grass, through which we slowly wended our way. Suddenly, however, we halted, and looking through the tall grass, saw some of the houses of the Agai Ambu tribe close at hand. Down we all crouched, hiding ourselves among the grass, while two of our Baruga guides, who speak the language of the Agai Ambu, went forward to try and parley with them and induce them to be friendly with us. We soon heard them yelling out to the Agai Ambu, who yelled back in reply. This went on for some minutes, when the Baruga men called out to us to come on. Jumping up, we rushed forward through the grass and witnessed a remarkable scene. In front of us was a lake thickly covered with water-lilies, most of them long-stemmed and of a very beautiful blue, with a yellow centre, and with large leaves, the edges of which were covered with a kind of thorn; there were also some white ones with yellow centre. On the other side of the lake were several curious houses built on long poles in the water, the houses themselves being a good height above the water.

The lake presented a scene of great confusion. The inhabitants were fleeing away from us in their curious canoes, which, unlike most Papuan canoes, had no outrigger whatever. Their paddles also were peculiar, the blades being very broad. Close to us were our two Baruga guides in a canoe with one of the Agai Ambu tribe, who directly he saw us plunged into the lake and disappeared under the tangled masses of water lilies. He remained under some time, but on his coming to the surface again, one of the Baruga men plunged in after him, and we witnessed an exciting wrestling match in the water. The Baruga man was by far the more powerful of the two, but he was no match for the almost amphibious Agai Ambu, who slipped away from his grasp like an eel, and swam away, with the Baruga man in close pursuit. All this time a canoe full of the Agai Ambu was rapidly approaching to the rescue, waving their paddles over their heads, and the Baruga man, seeing this, climbed back into his canoe and paddled back to us. Meanwhile the police had made a rush for a canoe which was close at hand; but it at once upset, having no outrigger and being exceedingly light and thin; it was, in fact, a species of canoe quite new to our police. In any case they would not have had the slightest chance of overtaking the fleet Agai Ambu in their own canoes. It looked very much as if after all we were not to have the chance of verifying the strange reports about the formation of these people. As a last resource we sent over our two Baruga guides in a canoe to speak with those of the tribe who had not fled.

As the guides approached they shouted out that we were friends, and that as we were friends of the Baruga tribe, we must be friends of the Agai Ambu tribe as well. We held up various tempting trade goods, including a calico known as Turkey-red, bottles of beads, etc. This and a long conversation with the Baruga men seemed to carry some weight with them, for the Baruga soon returned with one of their number, who turned round in the canoe with his arms outstretched to his friends and cried or rather chanted, in a sobbing voice, what sounded like a very weird song, which seemed quite in keeping with the mournful surroundings and lonely life of these people. This weird song, heard under such circumstances, quite thrilled me, and wild and savage though the singer was, the song appealed to me more than any other song has ever done. It looked as if he might be ane'er-do-weel or an idiot whom his friends could afford to experiment with before taking the risk of coming over themselves, but his song was no doubt a farewell to his friends, whom he possibly never expected to see again. He certainly looked horribly frightened as he stepped out of the canoe. We at once saw that there was some truth in the reports about the physical formation of these people, although there had been exaggeration in the descriptions of their feet as "webbed." There was, between the toes, an epidermal growth more distinct than in the case of other peoples, though not so conspicuous as to permit of the epithet "half-webbed," much less "webbed," being applied to them. The most noticeable difference was that their legs below the knee were distinctly shorter than those of the ordinary Papuan, and that their feet seemed much broader and shorter and very flat, so that altogether they presented a most extraordinary appearance.

The Agai Ambu hardly ever walk on dry land, and their feet bleed if they attempt to do so. They appeared to be slightly bowlegged and walk with a mincing gait, lifting their feet straight up, as if they were pulling them out of the mud. Sir Francis Winter, the acting Governor of British New Guinea, was so interested in our discovery, that he himself made another expedition with Monckton to see these people, while I was still in New Guinea. On his return I stayed with him for some time at Government House, Port Moresby, and he gave me a copy of his report on the Agai Ambu, which explains the curious physical formation of these people better than I could do. He says: "On the other side of this mere, and close to a bed of reeds and flags, was a little village of the small Ahgai-ambo tribe, and about three-quarters of a mile off was a second village. After much shouting our Baruga followers induced two men and a woman to come across to us from the nearest village. Each came in a small canoe, which, standing up, they propelled with a long pole. One man and the woman ventured on shore to where we were standing.” The Ahgai-ambo have for a period that extends beyond native traditions lived in this swamp. At one time they were fairly numerous, but a few years ago some epidemic reduced them to about forty. They never leave their morass, and the Baruga assured us that they are not able to walk properly on hard ground, and that their feet soon bleed if they try to do so. The man that came on shore was for a native middle-aged. He would have been a fair-sized native, had his body from the hips downward been proportionate to the upper part of his frame. He had a good chest and, for a native, a thick neck; and his arms matched his trunk. His buttocks and thighs were disproportionately small, and his legs still more so. His feet were short and broad, and very thin and flat, with, for a native, weak-looking toes.

This last feature was still more noticeable in the woman, whose toes were long and slight and stood out rigidly from the foot as though they possessed no joints. The feet of both the man and the woman seemed to rest on the ground something as wooden feet would do. The skin above the knees of the man was in loose folds, and the sinews and muscles around the knee were not well developed. The muscles of the shin were much better developed than those of the calf. In the ordinary native the skin on the loins is smooth and tight, and the anatomy of the body is clearly discernible; but the Ahgai-ambo man had several folds of thick skin or muscle across the loins, which concealed the outline of his frame. On placing one of our natives, of the same height, alongside the marsh man, we noticed that our native was about three inches higher at the hips. "I had a good view of our visitor, while he was standing sideways towards me, and in figure and carriage he looked to me more ape-like than any human being that I have seen. The woman, who was of middle age, was much more slightly formed than the man, but her legs were short and slender in proportion to her figure, which from the waist to the knees was clothed in a wrapper of native cloth. "The houses of the near village were built on piles, at a height of about twelve feet from the surface of the water, but one house at the far village must have been three or four feet more elevated. Their canoes, which are small, long, and narrow, and have no outrigger, axe hollowed out to a mere shell to give them buoyancy. Although the open water was several feet deep, it was so full of aquatic plants that a craft of any width, or drawing more than a few inches, would make but slow progress through it. Needless to say that these craft, which retain the round form of the log, are exceedingly unstable, but their owners stand up in them and, pole them along without any difficulty.

"These people are very expert swimmers, and can glide through beds of reeds or rushes, or over masses of floating vegetable matter, with ease. They live on wild fowl, fish, sago and marsh plants, and on vegetables procured from the Baruga in exchange for fish and sago. They keep a few pigs on platforms built underneath or alongside their houses. Their dead they place on small platforms among the reeds, and cover the corpse over with a roof of rude matting. Their dialect is almost the same as that of the Baruga. Probably their ancestors at one time lived close to the swamp, and in order to escape from their enemies were driven to seek a permanent refuge in it." Thus it will be seen that Sir Francis was much impressed with these people, and he heartily congratulated me upon our discovery.

To resume my personal account. We soon gave the man confidence by presenting him with an axe, some calico and beads, and a small looking-glass, which was held in front of him. He gazed in stupefied wonderment at his own features so plainly depicted before him. He was taken back to the other side, and soon returned with two more of his tribe, who brought us a live pig, which they hauled out from a raised flooring beneath one of their houses. The country all round us seemed to be one large swamp, and we stood upon a springy foundation of reeds and mud; except for these, we should undoubtedly have soon sunk out of sight in the mud. As it was, we stood in a foot of water most of the time, and in places we had to wade through mud over our knees. The lake swarmed with many kinds of curious water-birds, the most common being a red-headed kind of plover; there was also a great variety of duck and teal. The swamps were full of large spiders, which crawled all over us; we had to keep continually brushing them off.

Farther down the lake we saw another small village, and we were told that these two villages comprised the whole of this curious tribe. Whether they axe the remnants of a once powerful tribe it is impossible to say, but their position is well-nigh impregnable in case they are ever attacked, as their houses are surrounded by swamps and water on all sides, and no outsider could very well get through the swamps to their villages. The only possible way to get there would be to cross the water in their shell-like canoes, a feat which no man of any other tribe would ever be able to manage.

Monckton thought that these swamps and lake were formed by an overflow of the Musa River. This had been a phenomenally dry season for New Guinea, so these swamps in an ordinary wet season must be under water to the depth of many feet.

We camped close by on the borders of the forest amid a jungle of rank luxuriant vegetation, over which hovered large and brilliant butterflies, among them a very large metallic green and black species (ORNITHOPTERA PRIAMUS) and a large one of a bright blue (PAPILIO ULYSES). The same afternoon we three went out shooting on the lake. Two of the Agai Ambu canoes were lashed together and a raft of split bamboo put across them, and two Agai Ambu men punted and paddled us about. Before starting we had first educated them up to the report of our guns, and after a few shots they soon got over their fright.

The lake positively swarmed with water-fowl, including several varieties of duck, also shag, divers, pigmy geese, small teal, grebe, red-headed plover, spur-wing plover, curlew, sandpipers, snipe, swamp hen, water-rail, and many other birds. The red-headed plover were especially numerous, and ran about on the surface of the lake, which was covered with the water-lily leaves and a thick sort of mossy weed. All the birds seemed remarkably tame, and we got a good assorted bag, chiefly duck - enough to supply most of our large force with. I stopped most of the time on the raised platform of one of the houses and shot the duck, which Acland and Monckton put up, as they flew over my head. I had a companion in old Giwi, the chief of the Kaili-kailis, many of whom were among our carriers. He seemed to be on very friendly terms with one of the Agai Ambu on whose hut I was. Presently a woman came over in a canoe from one of the houses in the far village, and climbed up on to the platform where we were. Directly she saw old Giwi, she caught hold of him and hugged and kissed him all over and rubbed her face against his body, covering him with the black pigment with which she had smeared her face. She was sobbing all the time and chanting a very mournful but not unmusical kind of song. This exhibition lasted over half an hour, and poor old Giwi looked quite bewildered, and gazed up at me in a most piteous way, as much as to say: "Awful nuisance, this woman - but what am I to do?" He understood the meaning of this performance as little as I did.

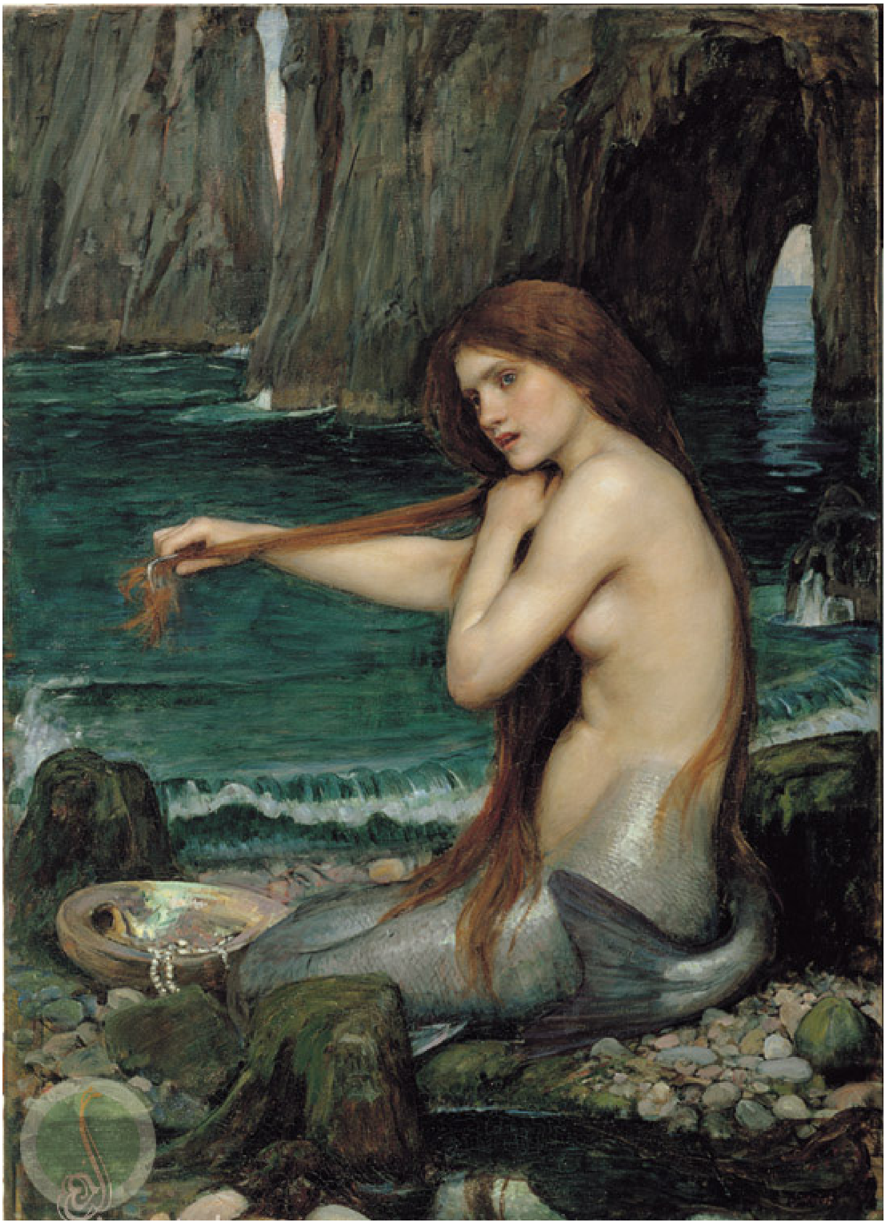
Possibly the woman was frightened of us, and seeing a stranger of her own colour in old Giwi, appealed to him for protection. The Baruga, however, had previously told us that the Agai Ambu had recently captured one of their women, and

I have since thought that this might possibly have been the woman, and am sorry I did not make inquiries at the time. At all events, old Giwi was too courteous to shake her off, though to me it was a most amusing sight, and it was all I could do to refrain from laughing aloud. We saw the dead body of a man half-wrapped in mats tied to poles in the middle of the lake. They always dispose of their dead thus, and I suppose leave them there till they rot or dry up.

The chief food of these people seemed to be the bulbs of the water-lilies, fish and shellfish. They catch plenty of water-fowl by diving under them and pulling them under the water by the legs before they have time to make any noise. By this method they do not frighten the rest away, and this accounts for the birds' extreme tameness.

It seemed odd that we should be paddled about the lake, to shoot wild fowl, by these people, who until to-day had never seen a white man before and had fled from us in the morning. However, most of them had fled and would not return until we had left their country. There is little doubt that this part of the country is most unhealthy. Many of our police and carriers were two days later down with fever, and a few weeks later I had a bad attack of fever, with which I was laid up in Samarai for some time, and which I feel sure I got into my system in this swamp. The mosquitoes were certainly very plentiful and vicious. We spent the following day here, duck-shooting on the lake, and I did a little natural-history collecting in the adjacent forest. We had intended to try and induce two of the Agai Ambu to accompany us back to Cape Nelson, but most unfortunately they understood that we were going to take them forcibly away. They became alarmed and all disappeared, and we were not able to get into communication with the magain. When Sir Francis Winter visited them about a month later they were evidently quite friendly again, but on the second day of his visit his native followers demanded a pig of the Agai Ambu in his, Sir Francis's, name. At this they became alarmed and retreated to the further village, and he was unable to see anymore of them. Since then I believe nothing more has been seen of these flat-footed people.

Ama diver digging in the seaweed for shells. Photo from Japanese web-site. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html



[Painting by Waterhouse of a conventional mermaid]

Appendix two

After I published my book on the Internet some people have written to me to say that if we accept the Aquatic Ape Theory then perhaps some Aquatic humans split off from the main human group and continue to evolve into a fully aquatic animal. And this fully aquatic human is the origins of the mermaid myth.

I have to admit I have had considered this myself. And I have to admit in researching mermaid myths, there are many sightings where people have claimed to have seen a woman with a tail of a fish. But in the end I have rejected this idea simply because the evidence of a fully aquatic human is so weak while there is far more evidence to support the idea that mermaids are simply woman divers. Also it is doubtful in the time available that humans could evolve into a fully aquatic creature.

Yet I am not going to reject this idea completely, simply because it is a nice idea. So I would like to put forward the reasons why it might be possible, without taking it too seriously.

Clearly it is very unlikely a human can evolve to have a fish tail, simply because a human is a mammal and not a fish. But a dolphin is a mammal, so could a human evolve to have a tail like a dolphin? Again no, human beings do not have tails, dolphins evolved from a semi-aquatic animal similar to the beaver or platypus both of which have large flat tails that use them to propel themselves through the water. Over evolutionary time these tails changed to become more efficient until they look like fish tails.

So if we want to look to what a fully aquatic human would look like, we have to look at the seal. A seal like a human doesn't have a tail, and so it uses its hind legs to propel itself through the water. With its hind legs evolving to now look something like the feet of a water-bird with webbing between its toes. The seal then can move its body side to side to propel itself along like a fish.

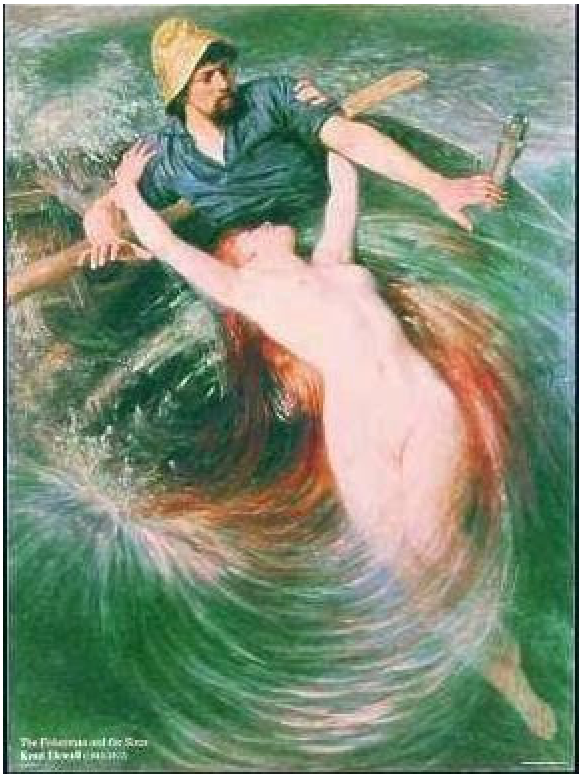
It is an open secret that Olympic champion swimmers like Mark Spitz, Michael Phelps and Ian Thorpe, have either large hands or feet to help propel themselves through the water. So an aquatic human would likewise evolve very large feet and perhaps webbed toes and end up having feet that look like flippers. Which would be a great help in the water but a handicap on land, as anyone will know who have attempted to walk on land with flippers on their feet.

It is doubtful if an aquatic human would evolve very large hands, simply because large hands are a help in swimming on the surface of the water but can create a lot of drag when swimming underwater. Also an aquatic human will survive by using their hands to pick shellfish of the bottom of the sea, and so will not be using them all the time for forward propulsion. This means, if a fully aquatic human did evolve the only difference it would have from ordinary humans it that it has large flipper like feet. Which would be a big advantage in the water but a handicap out of the water.

In spite of this such a human being my still look like a traditional mermaid. As previously pointed out in many mermaid reports of the past the mermaid has two tails which will be the mermaids legs. Also in the sport of swimming there is a difference of opinion whether it is quicker to swim using a butterfly kick, that is keeping your feet together, or kicking your legs alternatively like in overarm swimming. So it could be that some aquatic humans did keep their legs together while swimming and this would look like a fish tail.

So if a branch of humans evolved like this they clearly don't exist today. There has been very few reports of mermaids in the 20th century, and these reports are doubtful. If an aquatic human still exists it would have to be fully aquatic, as it would have to be independent of land. Simply because there are very few beaches in the world today where there are not people, so any fully aquatic human coming onto a beach will be spotted by ordinary humans. This aquatic human will then have to be so frightened of ordinary humans that they will stay out of sight when they spot any boats or ships. They would have to be able to survive drinking seawater all the time. And be able to sleep at sea without drowning. They could perhaps feed of shellfish and seaweed in shallow seas but today coastal waters are full of human beings so they will be spotted and perhaps photographed. To avoided land humans they might go far out into the oceans, but there they would have to swim fast enough to catch fish.

Even if an aquatic human evolved to be able to survive on the open ocean. Nowadays there are large fishing ships that put out very large fishing nets that catch everything including dolphins. If this is the case, then surely these nets will also catch any aquatic humans swimming in the oceans.



[Painting by Knut Ekwall called The fisherman and mermaid, again the artist show a mermaid as a ordinary woman.]

If it is very doubtful that a fully aquatic human exists today, could there have been a fully aquatic human in the past that became extinct? Now this is a real possibility considering that men have a history of committing genocide against any other race that looks slightly different from themselves. Any aquatic human that is not completely independent of land will be at a disadvantage if it meets any hostile ordinary human beings on land. So it might be that any branch of humans that became more aquatic than ordinary humans may have been wiped out by men simply because they looked strange and different. This could be the case of the duck feet people mentioned in Appendix One.

As mentioned before it seems that on many Pacific islands there is archaeological evidence that there were people living there before the Polynesians arrived. On these remote islands where people lived mainly on seafood, humans could have become more aquatic than normal humans, but were then wiped out when ordinary humans like the Polynesians arrived on these islands. Certainly the Polynesians do have mermaid legends and this might be the origins of them.

But this is all very much speculation; the only evidence of this is mermaid myths and that is all. Whereas the evidence that mermaids are simply women divers is far stronger. The only way something like this can be proven is if skeletons of ancient human are discovered with large flipper like feet.

Ama wringing water out of her hair
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html

Photograph by Fosco Maraini, from his book, *Hekura, The Diving Girl's Island,* of an ama diver on boat preparing to dive.

Appendix Three

When I first done my blog I had a lot of Ama photographs but none of Haenyo divers, but recently this has changed. So what I have done is collected them all together and put them in the Appendix.

[The two photographs above are of haenyo divers foraging for marine food in their wet-suits. From the film"Song of Haenyo" (South Korea 2006) by Minjoo Lee http://www.flickr.com/photos/globians/564310551/
A description of haenyo divers at work can be read at the following link.-
http://www.divernet.com/cgi-bin/articles.pl?id=2905&sc=&ac=d&an=]

The photograph above is by Grete Howard at –
http://www.flickr.com/photos/11683866@N06/3044342916/
The following is what she writes on haenyo divers

The haenyo, literally meaning "sea women", are female divers in the Korean province of Jeju. They are representative of the matriarchal family structure of Jeju. Until the 19th century, diving was mostly done by men. The job became unprofitable for men since they had to pay heavy taxes, unlike women who did not. Women took over the diving (which was considered the lowest of jobs) and, because of the great dependence on sea products in most places on Jeju, became the main breadwinners. It could also be said that women simply were more adapted for the job, with their bodies keeping them warmer and being more suited to swimming than a male - with more bodyfat and a lack of protruding external genitalia. With that, they often became "the head" of their family.

Unfortunately she has repeated, male chauvinist Korean put-downs of the haenyo women. Diving wasn't the lowest pay jobs because why would Korean men in the past, stay at home and look after the house and children, if they could earn better money elsewhere? We certainly know that women divers were the main breadwinners long before the 19th century. As previously mentioned there were once haenyo divers on the mainland but women divers were banned by law. As previously mentioned there were once haenyo divers on the mainland but women divers were banned by law. As explained on the, UNESCO World Cultural Heritage web-site about haenyo divers (Which they used the spelling Jamnyeo.)-

http://wcms.cheju.ac.kr/island/index.jsp?siteID=20061212114229289062&menuID=20061216182306439857&contentID=2006121814314575215 4&action=view

They didn't limit their diving skills and activities to Jeju Island only. Since 1895, as they developed their diving skills into original jobs, they started to migrate to many foreign places on the Korean Peninsula and in Japan. As they have seasonally gone abroad or to the Korean peninsula to earn money at sea, they have contributed support to large portions of the island economy as a whole, by sending or bringing cash to their hometowns. Their migrations and settlements extended all over East Asia, to many areas on the Korean Peninsula, 10 places in Japan, 2 places in mainland China, and one place in Russia. In all these places, Jamnyeos have been recognized for their special skills in harvesting sea products of high economic value.

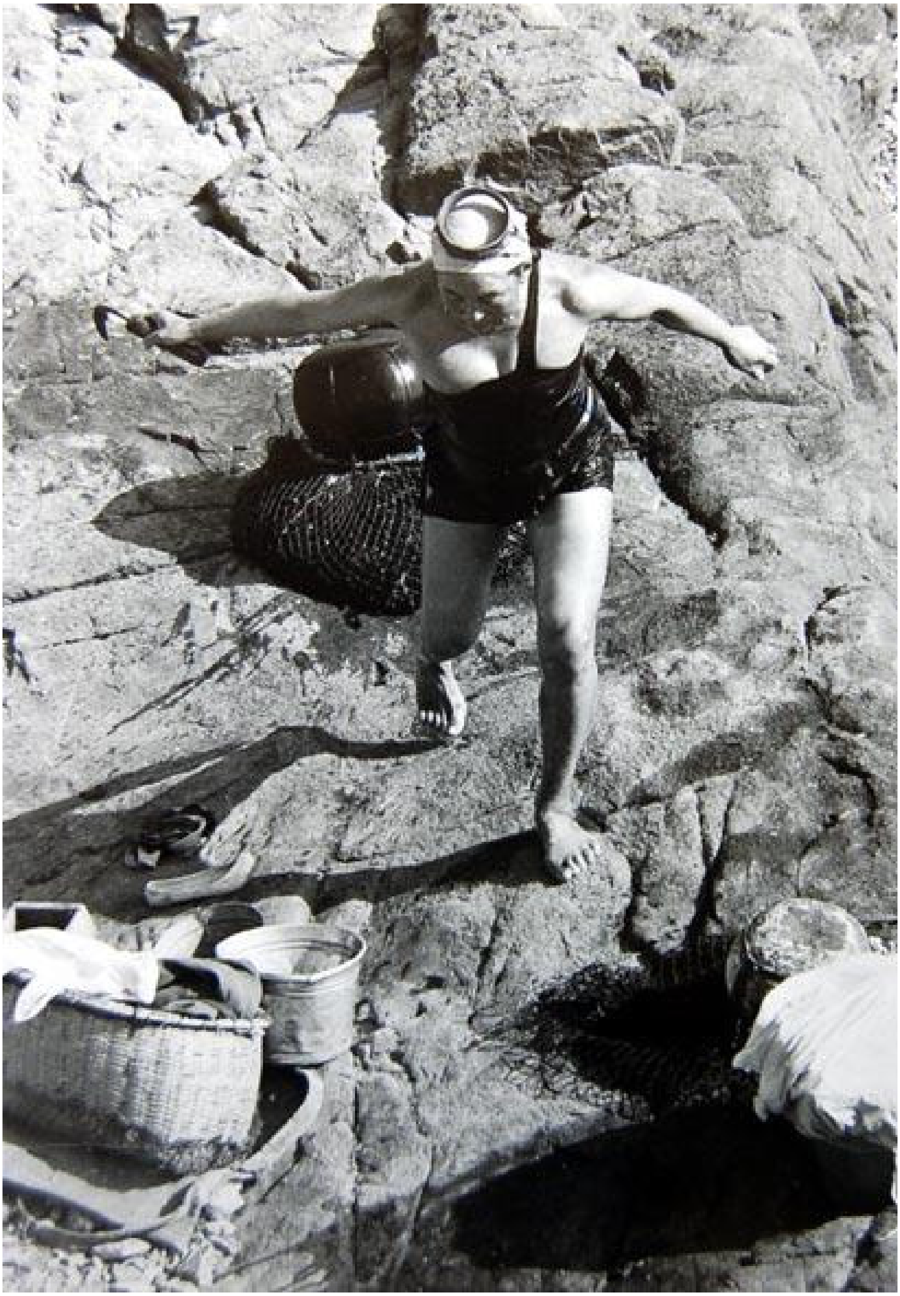
Jamnyeos are another spelling for haenyo. As we can see haenyo divers have been an important conribution to Jeju Island community. This is why haenyo divers have survived on Jeju but were successfully banned on the mainland.

It is very interesting that the status of women on Mara Island, where fisheries provide the sole occupation, is superior to men's both in the home and in the larger society. This status derives from the economic importance of their achievements at sea.

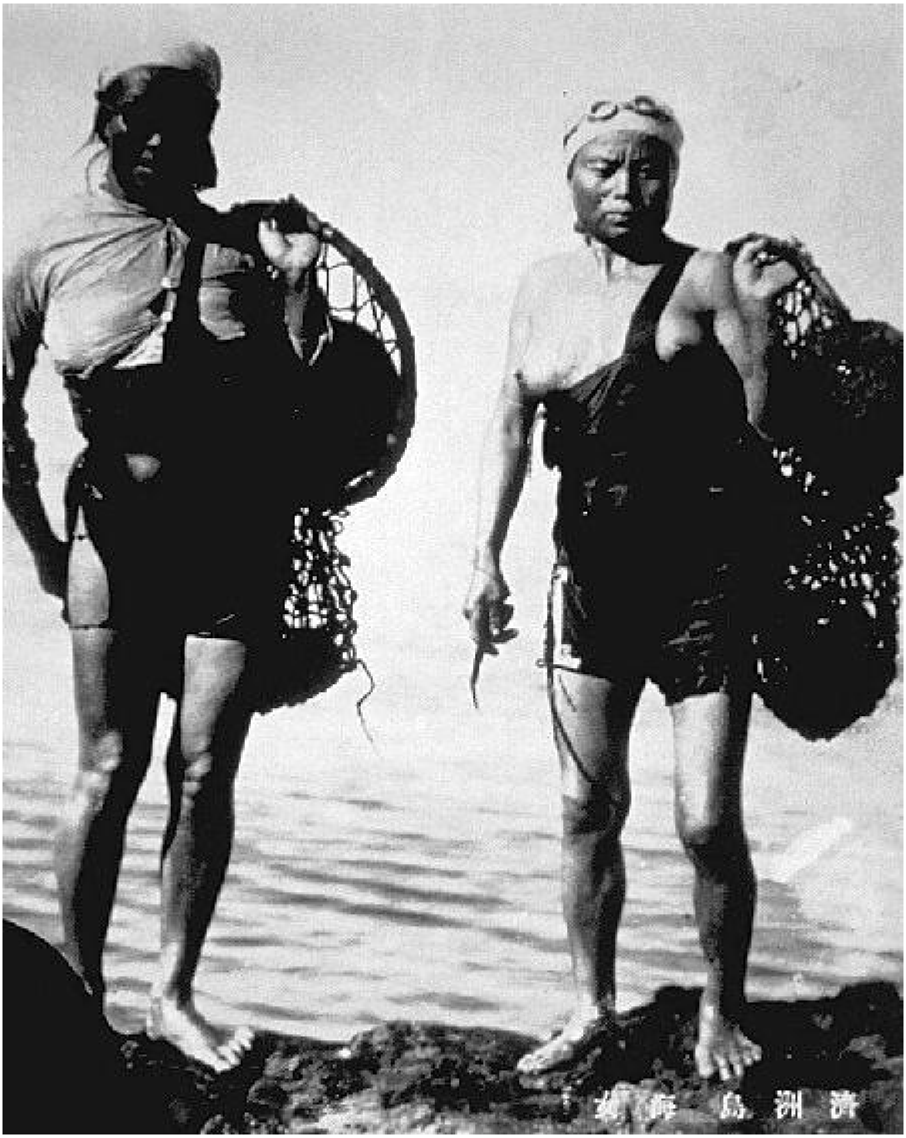
Film still, takem from the Korean film “My Mother, The Mermaid”.
http://dooliblog.com/2008/03/08/my-mother-the-mermaid-de-park-heung-shik-2004/

Haenyo women diving off a raft. From web-site. -
http://www.artmuseums.kr/admin/?corea=sub5_2&parade=date&asc_desc=asc&no=17

Women divers head home at sunset after diving for abalone and other shellfish. Provided by the Jeju Photography Club and the Jeju Haenyeo Museum. From web-site.
http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2884000



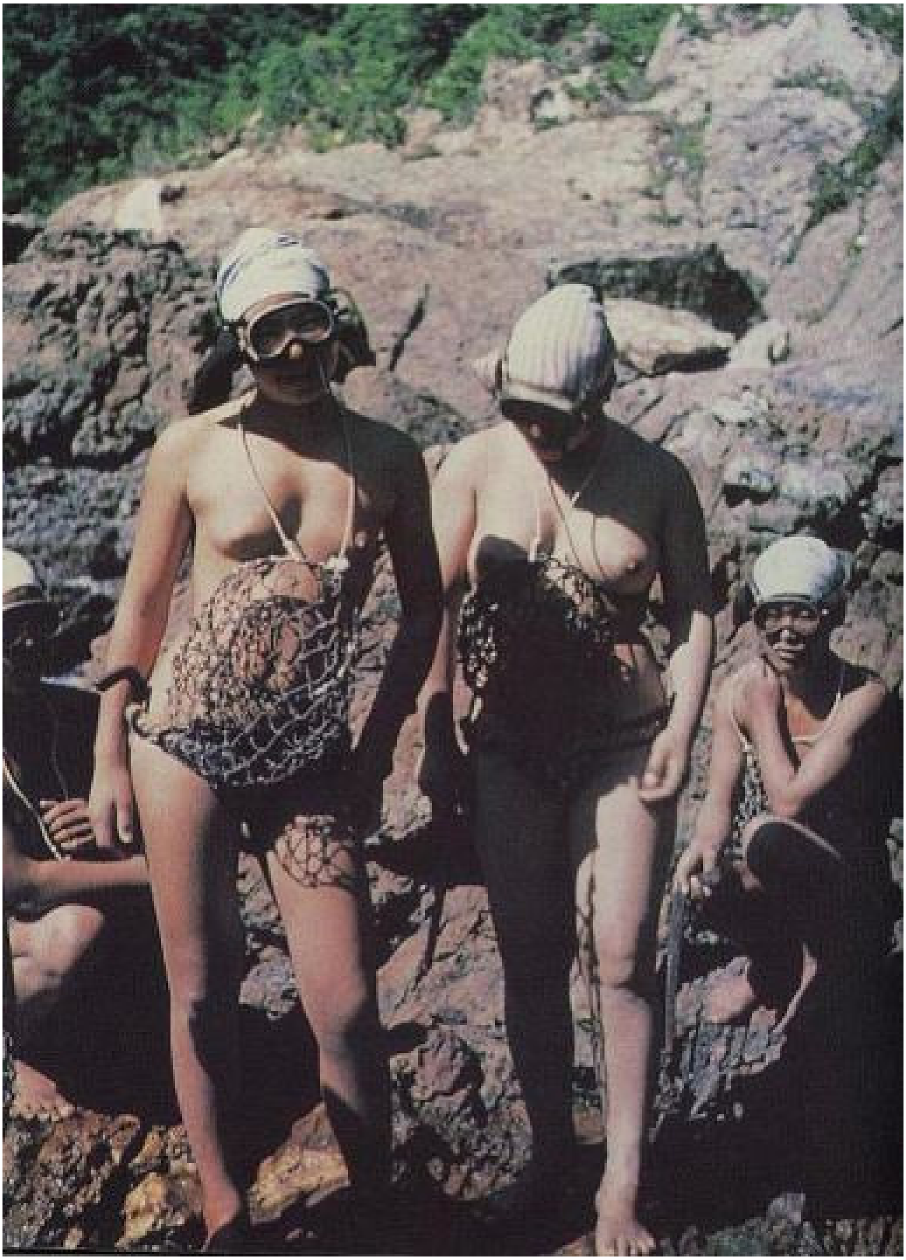
Haenyo seeming to be prepared to dive off rocks into the sea. Photographed in 1966, web-site.- http://blog.daum.net/sbkim314



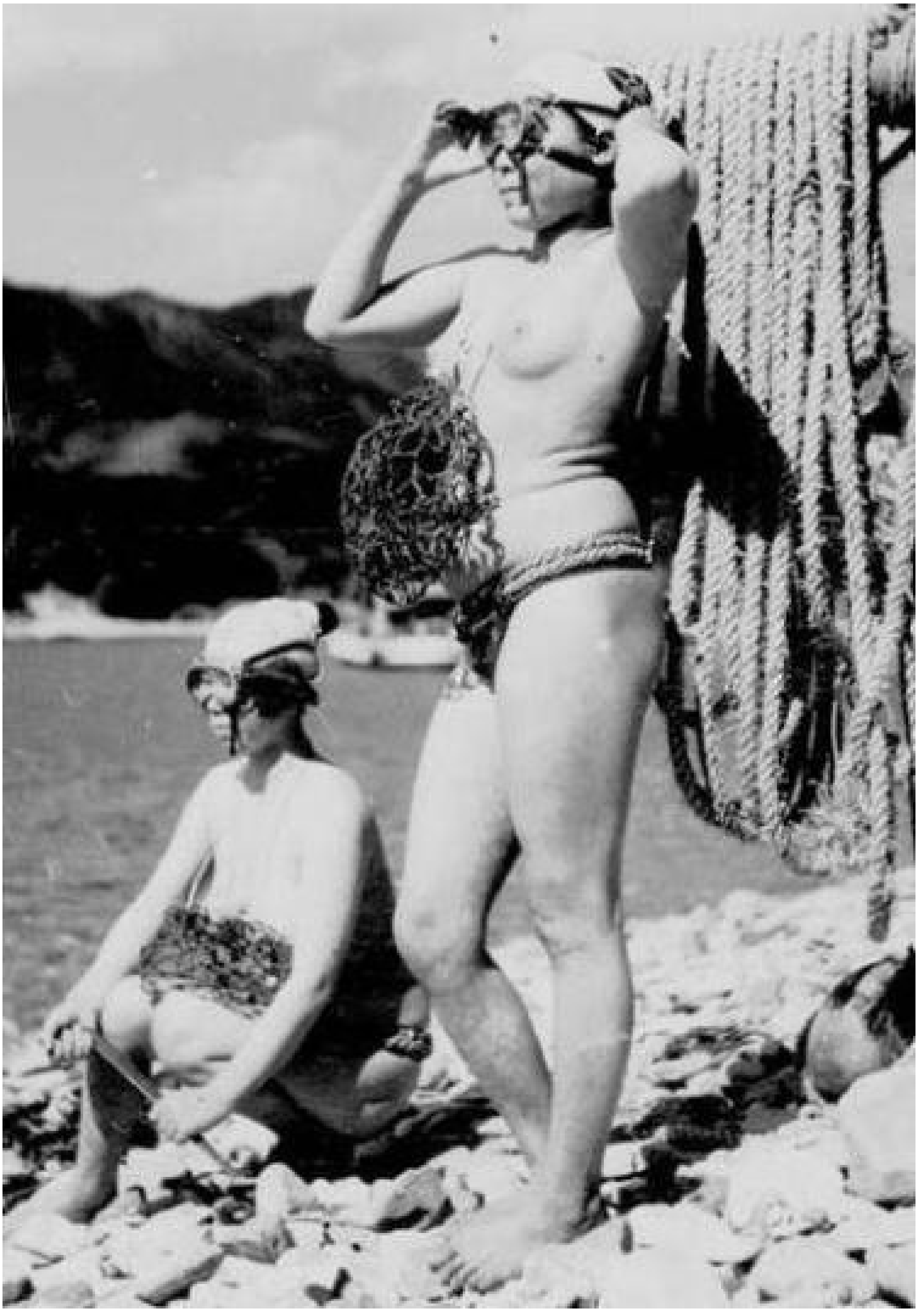
Two heanyo divers at the time of the Japanese occupation, the faces of these two women shows us how hard life was for heanyo women in the past. Though this might also be to do with how badly the Jeju people suffered during the Japanese military occupation.

Taken from web-site.

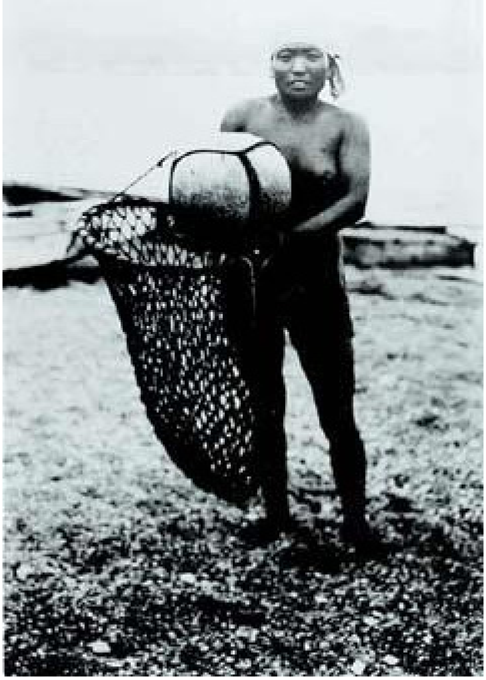
http://travel.sohu.com/20061030/n246091523.shtml



When I first came across this photograph I assumed that the women were Japanese ama divers, but further research has show them to be probably haenyo. This is because Korean divers use nets in which to collect marine food but ama divers it seems generally don't do this. Taken from web-site. - http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html



Another picture of heanyo divers whom unlike ama diver use a string bag or nets in which to collect marine food.
http://www.fundoshi-bikini.net/nihon-fundoshi/amafun/amafundoshi.html



Haenyo diver photographed in 1914. This photograph clearly shows the differences of equipment between ama and haenyo divers. Haenyo divers uses a float and net and drop what they have foraged from the sea floor into the floating net. While ama divers simply use a wooden tub which they float on the water and placing marine food within it. From web-site. – http://www.hani.co.kr/section-009000000/2005/03/009000000200503311650091.html

Still from Korean Film, "My Mother The Mermaid", from web-site. - http://dooliblog.com/2008/03/08/my-mother-the-mermaid-de-park-heung-shik-2004/

The Wave, by William Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905)

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Photograph on left of ama, from web-page.- www.fundoshi-bikini.net/leserbrief/kaito-2.jpg

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Actaea, the Nymph of the Shore. by Frederic Leighton (1868).

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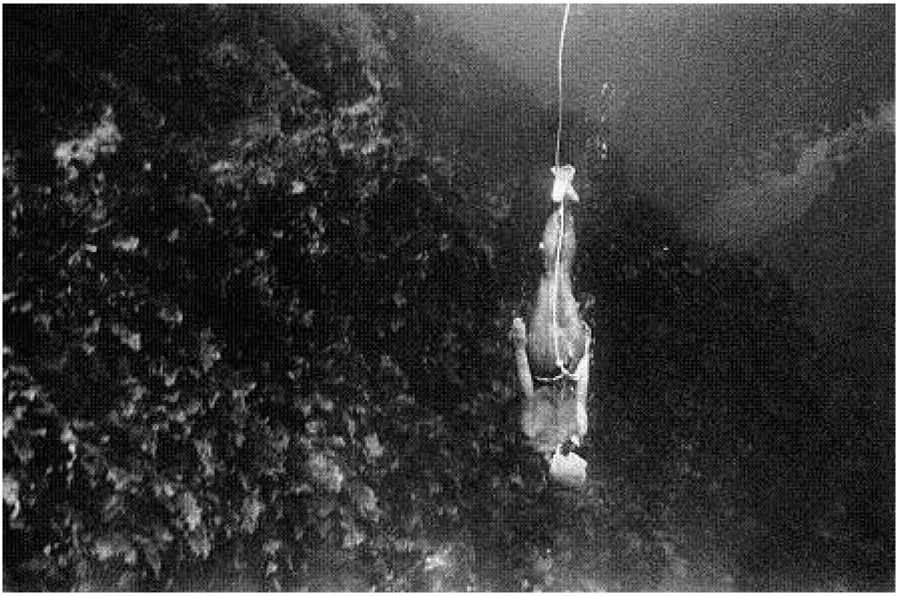
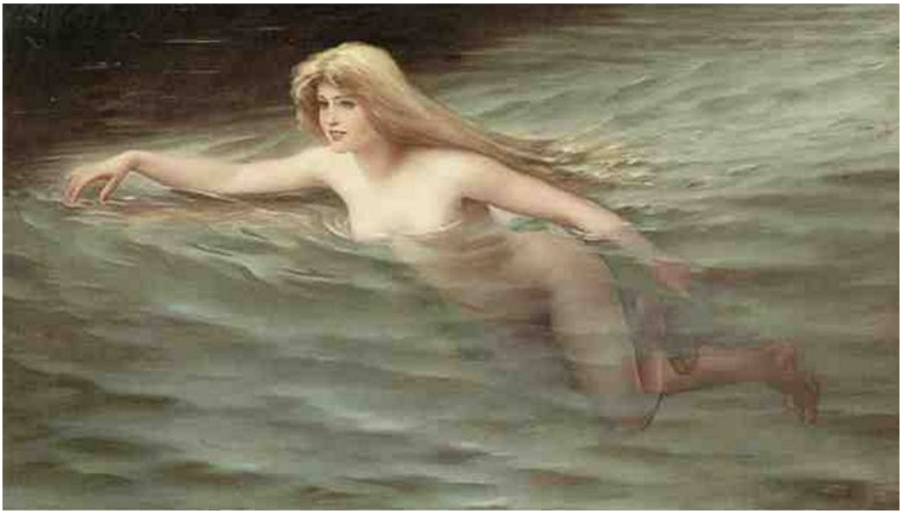


Photograph by Fosco Maraini, of a Ama diving.



Painting by Luis Riccardo Falero (1851-1896) of a Nymph. This painting shows nymphs, as they really were, just ordinary women swimming in the sea.